Four Basic Qur'anic Terms

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INTRODUCTION

Four Basic Terms

Ilah, Rabb, Deen and 'Ibadah, are four terms basic to the whole teaching of the Qur'an.

Through- out its pages, it stresses again and again that Allah Almighty is the Rabb and the Ilah ;that there is no ilah but He, nor is there any other rabb, nor does He share with anyone else the qualities and attributes implied by these terms. He, and He alone should therefore be accepted as one's Ilah and Rabb, and no-one else should in the least be believed to possess the attributes which these words imply. It also demands that we should give our ibadah to Him and Him alone, and not to anyone else, and make our deen exclusive to Him and reject all other deens!

And to every Messenger We ordained before you (O Prophet), the message which We gave (for himself and for others) was none other than that "There is no Ilah but Myself, and therefore give your 'ibadah to Me alone. " (Quran 21:25)

...., And (they) were not Ordered except to give their 'ibadah to one Ilah, only; there is no ilah except He, (end) He is free of (the taint of) what they attribute to Him by their shirk (that is, by associating others with Him in His exclusive qualities and attributes). (Quran 9:31)

Verily this Brotherhood of the Prophets is single Brotherhood, and I am the Rabb of you all, wherefore give your 'ibadah to Me alone. (Quran 21:92)

Say' to them (0 Prophet): Would you have me seek-for rabb any other then Allah, and He the Rabb of everything there is! (Quran 6:164)

So, whosoever yearns to meet his Rabb, let him do good deeds, and let him not mix up his ibadah of Him with that of any other(s). (Quran 18:110)

And indeed we raised a Messenger in every people that they should give their 'ibadah to Allah, and abstain severely from giving it to taghoot. [Literally, this word can apply to a person who commits any kind of transgression. In the sense in which it is used in the Qur'an it denotes a person who transgresses the limits prescribed by his status as a creation of God, who sets himself up as a god and makes the people treat him as such. There are three degrees of transgression or rebellion of a human being vis-a-vis God. The first is that, so far as the principle of the thing is concerned, a person believes in obedience to God to be the right course, but when it comes to deeds, he disobeys. This is known as fisq ... The second is that he should give up obedience to God as a matter of principle and either do as he pleases or obey someone else (in the sense in which one owes obedience to God). This is Kufr. The third is that not only does he rebel against God, denying Him and His right to lay down the law for man but also begins to make his own law prevail in the land. It is the person who reaches this third stage who is a Taghoot and no person can be a Mu'min of Allah in the real sense unless he repudiates Taghoot. A.A. Maududi (Note by the Translator: From the point of view as last explained all those "Muslim" heads of state who deliberately substituted any portion of Islamic by non-Islamic law fall naturally to the category of Taghoots, no matter how much they might protest their devotion to Islam and their professed desire for the glory of Muslims, though in the latter case the glory, actually sought is only that of their own notion and the means advocated are often either a return to their pre-Islamic culture or the adoption of the present day decadent Western culture. Abu

Asad)] (Quran 16: 30)

Do you wish for some deen other than' Allah's, (and this despite the fact that to Him submits all there is in the Heavens and in or upon the Earth, willingly or unwilling, and all are to return unto Him? (Quran 3:83)

Say (O Prophet): The Injunction laid upon me is to give my 'ibadah to Allah, and reserve my deen exclusively for Him. (Quran 39:11)

Verily Allah is my Rabb, and is yours too; therefore, give your worship to Him alone- that (truly is the only real) straight path. (Quran 3:51)

The verses quoted above are just by way of example, and not the only ones of their kind. Whosoever makes more than a cursory study of the Qur'an will soon realize that the entire contents revolve round these four terms only, and that the central idea of the whole book is that:
Allah is the Rabb, and the Ilah;
No-one else possesses the qualities and attributes implied by these terms;
Therefore men should give their 'ibadah to Him and Him alone; and one's deen should be exclusively for Him with no share of it for any other.

Importance

It should however be obvious even from the quotations given that it is essential for proper comprehension of the teachings of the Qur'an fully to understand the implications of these four terms. The Qur'an will in fact lose its whole meaning for anyone who does not know what is meant by ilah or rabb, what constitutes 'iba'dah, and what the Qur'an means when it uses the word deen. He will fail to learn what Tawhid (belief in the One-ness of Allah in the fullest sense) is, or what constitutes its anti-thesis, that is, shirk (the attribution to others, either wholly or partially, of any of Allah's exclusive qualities or attributes).

It will not be possible for him to make his 'ibadah, or his deen, exclusive for Allah alone. And little better than such a completely ignorant man would be the one who has only a vague idea of what the terms imply, because in that case the whole teaching of the Qur'an will remain vague and incomplete for him, and both his belief and his conduct will fatally leave much to be desired. He will no doubt keep on reciting the words of the kalimah, and even explain that it means that there is no ilah but Allah, and yet, in practice, he will keep treating many another to be an ilah too. He will go through life proclaiming that there is no rabb but Allah, and yet for all that there will be many whom he will be treating as rabbs. He will protest, and affirm, with all seriousness and sincerity, that he does not give his 'ibadah to any but Allah, and will yet keep giving to others unknowingly, If anyone even so much as hints that he has any other deen, he would feel offended enough to come to blows with the accuser, and yet in practice, he will unwittingly be giving his allegiance to many another deen. No-one will ever hear him actually use the words Allah or rabb in respect of any but in the specific sense in which the words have been employed in the Qur'an, but he will be conducting himself as if he had many an ila'h and many a rabb though without realizing

this just like the person who never realized until he was specifically fold that he had been uttering prose all his life; If someone were to tell him in so many words that he was giving his 'ibadah to others, and thus committing shirk, he might resent this strongly and even quarrel violently, but according to the criteria applicable he will unconsciously have been living as a worshiper of others as an adherent of the deens of others, without ever suspecting that in fact was the case.

Why the Misapprehensions?

The reason why the misapprehensions hinted at above have come into existence is a historical one. When the Qur'an was first presented to the Arabs they all knew what was meant by ilah or rabb as both the words were already current in their language. They were not new terms, nor were any new meanings put upon them. They knew fully well what the connotations were and so, when it was said that Allah alone is the Ilah, and the Rabb and that no-one has the least share in the qualities and attributes which the words denote, they at once comprehended the full import, understood completely without any doubt or uncertainty as to what specifically was being declared to Pertain to Allah exclusively and what was being hence denied to others. Those who opposed the precept were. very clear in their minds as to the implications of denying others than Allah to be ilahs or rabbs, in any sense, while those who accepted it knew equally well what they would have to give up by their acceptance and what they would forgo.

Similarly, the words 'ibadah and deen were in common use, and the people knew what was meant by 'abd, what state was implied by 'uboodiyyah (the state of being an 'abd) what kind of conduct was referred to when the word 'ibadah was used, and what was the sense of the term deen. So, when they were told to give up the 'ibadah of all others and reserve it exclusively for Allah, and give up all other deens and enter into the Deen of Allah only, they felt no difficulty in concluding what the Qur'anic d'awah (message) implied and the drastic revolution in their way of life it sought to bring about.

But as centuries passed, the real meanings of these terms gradually under went subtle changes so that, in course of time, instead of the full connotations, they came to stand for only very limited meanings or restricted and rather vague concepts. One reason was the gradual decline of interest in the Arabic language and the other that the words ceased to have the same meanings for the later generations of Muslims that they had for the original Arabs to whom the Qur'an had been revealed. It is for these two reasons that in the more recent lexicons and commentaries many of the Qur'anic words began to be explained not by their original sense but by what they had by then come to stand for, e.g.,
The word ilah, as used in respect of others than God, came to be synonymous with idols or gods;
The word rabb came to mean only someone who brings up or rears or feeds another or provides for his worldly needs;
'Ibadah began to be understood as the performance of a set of rituals of "worship";
Deen began to mean a religion, or belief in some precepts; and
The word Taghoot began to be translated to mean an idol or the Devil.

The result obviously was that it became difficult for people to get at the real message

of the Qur'an. The Qur'an asks people not to regard any other than Allah as an ilah. People thought that since they had actually given up the worship of idols or of others regarded as gods, they had fulfilled the requirements, although in practice they have in fact gone on treating others as gods, but without the least suspicion crossing their minds that they were actually doing so. The Qur'an had asked that men should not acknowledge any other than God as rabb. The people thought that since they did not profess anyone else to be a rabb, they had complied with the full requirements of the concept of Tawhid. True enough, their oral professions or even their own understanding of their beliefs and actions, denoted that for them Allah was the one and only Rabb, but they little realized that by their actions they were instead according to many another too the status of rabb. They protested that they no longer worshiped the idols that they uttered curses on the Devil, and prostrated themselves before Allah only, and so here too they were doing all that the Qur'an required of them. And yet, how far they were from that! All they did was to give up the idols shaped by the hands of men, but not any of the other Taghoots, and as for 'ibadah, here too, except for the formalities generally associated with worship, they continued giving it to many others besides Allah. The same has been the case with deen. To reserve it exclusively for Allah -came to mean to profess only the "religion of Islam," and not any of the other religions known as such, and this was all that was required and whosoever did this had satisfied the criterion of exclusiveness, although when looked at from the wider connotation of the word deen the majority fall far, far short of the criterion.

The Consequences

This being the case, is it any wonder that, through the mist that has come to surround the precise sense of the four terms in question, more than three-fourths of the teachings of the Qur'an, or rather, the real spirit thereof, have become obscured, and this is the main cause of the shortcomings that are to be seen in peoples' beliefs and acts despite the fact that they have not formally given up the faith of Islam but are still in its fold. It is therefore of utmost importance that in order to have a full and complete understanding of the Qur'anic teachings and of their central idea, one should know, as a fundamental to being a good Muslim, what these terms really mean.

Although I have given explanations of these terms in many earlier writings, they are not enough to remove all the misconceptions in peoples' minds, nor are they likely to satisfy everybody because, in the absence of full semantic explanations based on recognized Arabic usage, and quotations from the Qur'an itself, I might be taken as expressing my own opinion only, an opinion which in any case will not appeal to those who differ with me on other issues. I shall therefore endeavor, in the forthcoming discussions, to extensively quote the dictionary sense of the words, and not say anything which I cannot base either on recognized usage, or the Qur'an. The order I shall follow will be Ila'h, Rabb, Ibadah, and Deen.

ILAH

Dictionary Meanings

The root of this word consists of the three letters, alif, lam, and ha and the connotations of various derivations, as one finds in lexicons are as follows:
Became confused or perplexed.

Achieved peace and mental calm by seeking refuge with someone or establishing relations with him.
Became frightened of some impending mishap or disaster, and someone gave him the necessary shelter.
Turned to another eagerly, due to the intensity of his feelings for him.
The lost offspring of the she-camel rushed to snuggle up to its mother on finding it.
Became hidden, or concealed. Also, got elevated.
Adored, offered worship to.

If we reflect upon these original meanings, we can gain the necessary idea of how the verb came to mean the act of worship and the noun to denote the object of worship. There are four considerations to bear in mind in this connection:

1. Foremost among the factors which engender a sentiment of some degree of adoration for some one is a person's own state of being in distress or need. He cannot even conceive of worshiping someone unless he has reason to believe that someone to be in a position to remove his distress, to fulfill his needs, to give him shelter and protect him in time of danger, and soothe his troubled heart.
2. It goes without saying that the above belief is accompanied by a belief also in the superiority of the other in status, power, and strength.
3. It is also a matter of fact that where any of the needs of a human being are met under the ordinary process of give and take, which takes place perceptibly before one's own eyes, it leads to no sense of reverence, much less of adoration, for the other. For example, if I should be in need of money and, having applied for, and been given a job, am paid for it, since the whole transaction would take place within the full ken of my senses, and I would be fully aware of the circumstances or the reason for giving me the money, I would experience not the slightest desire to offer my employer any adoration. That sentiment arises only when there is some element of mystery surrounding the personality, the power, or the ability of the other to fulfill peoples' needs or to influence events. That is why the word chosen to denote an object of worship includes in its meanings the senses of mystery, perplexity, and superiority in status, etc.
4. Lastly, it is only natural that if one believes another to be in a position to fulfill one's needs, to provide shelter and protection, to soothe a disturbed heart and fill it with peace and calm, one turns eagerly to that person as a matter of course.

We may therefore safely conclude from the above that the connotation of the word ilah includes the capacities to fulfill the needs of others, to give them shelter and protection, to relieve their minds of distress and agitation, superiority, and the requisite authority and power to do all these, to be mysterious in some way or hidden from men's eyes, and the turning of men eagerly to him.

The Pre-Islamic Concept

Having discussed the various literal senses of the word, let us now see what the pre-Islamic concepts of ilah were, and which of these the Qur'an strove to reject:

And they have taken for their ilahs others than Allah that they may according to their reckoning be a source of strength to them (or that coming under their protection may confer security). (Quran 19:81)

And they have taken others than Allah as their ilahs hoping that they might be helped when needed. (Quran 36:74)

From these two verses we learn that the Arabs of the Jahiliyyah (the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance) believed that those whom they regarded as ilahs were their patrons, would come to their rescue in time of danger or difficulty, and that by placing themselves under their protection they rendered themselves safe from fear, molestation or harm.

And when the Decree of your Lord had gone forth (and the time came for its execution), the ilahs they used to invoke instead of Allah proved of no avail to them and contributed only to their doom. (Quran 11:101)

And those whom the people call to instead of Allah have not created aught, but are themselves creatures. Dead they are, and not alive, and they know not when they would be raised from their state, the real ilah is the One and Only Ilah. (Quran 16:20-21)

Invoke not; or pray to, any ilah along with Allah. There is no ilah but He. [It should be borne in mind that the word Ilah is used in the Qur'an in two different senses, namely, the object or being, etc., to whom worship is actually being given, irrespective of whether rightly or wrongly, and the Being who is really worthy of worship. In this verse, the word is used in the first sense on the first occasion and in the other sense on the second. - A.A.Maududi] (Quran 28:88)

....And those who, instead of praying to Allah, pray to His supposed associates do but follow suppositions and idle guesses. (Quran 10:66)

These verses point to three aspects. The first is that the Arabs used to address their prayers to those whom they regarded as their ilahs and invoke them in times of distress or for fulfillment of any of their needs. The second is that these ilahs included not only Jinns, angels, and gods, but dead humans too, as one can see from the second of the above verses. The third is that they believed that these ilahs could hear their prayers and could come to their rescue.

It seems desirable to clear up one point, at this stage, about the nature of the prayer made to the ilah or ilahs and the help or succour sought of them. If I feel thirsty, and call to my servant to give me some water, or am unwell and call for a doctor for treatment, my summons to them does not constitute du'a, that is, it has no similarity to a prayer sent up to a deity, nor does this make either the servant or the doctor into an ilah. Both these are common, in everyday happenings, with nothing of the supernatural about them. However, if I should, while feeling thirsty or unwell, call to some saint or god instead of the servant or a doctor, that obviously would amount to

treating the saint or god as an ilah and to my addressing a du'a to him. Addressing a prayer to a saint confined to his grave hundreds or even thousands of miles away [In point of principle, it makes no difference if the distance were of a few feet only, the significant point being the act of addressing a prayer to someone who is dead and is believed to possess, even in, or perhaps because of that state, some extraordinary powers not only of hearing the prayer but also of granting it if he so chooses. It is also believed that the saint may, if he cannot himself grant the prayer, pass it up to God with a recommendation. A.A.Maududi] clearly indicates that I believe him--though dead--to be possessed of the power to listen to a prayer at such a distance or to otherwise being aware of things so far off or, if one may use the appropriate Arabic words, to be both samee and baseer [Literally, these words, which are actually two of Allah's personal attributes, mean, the All-Hearing the A11-Seeing, respectively. God's knowledge transcends everything, and He is aware of everything that is happening anywhere. This is not the case with His creatures, whose capacities in these respects are severely limited. To believe someone other than God to have power to physically hear prayer offered out of his hearing or to see things happening out of his sight amounts to attributing to him powers which are God's only, and which He has never given to any of His creatures. A.A.M.]. My action would clearly imply belief in their exercising such a way over the realm of creation as to be able to have water reach me or to make me recover from my illness. In the case of a god, my prayer would mean that I believe him to possess power over water and over health and sickness, and to therefore arrange, by supernatural means, to fulfill my needs. Thus, the basis on which a prayer is addressed to someone includes necessarily a concept of his being possessed of some supernatural authority and power.

And, verily, We did destroy the places of which you see ruins about you, and We showed them Our signs in diverse ways that they might turn (away from their wrong ways to Us). So why did not those whom they had made their ilahs, and presumed to have access to Us, help them in their hour of doom? Far from helping, they abandoned them and made themselves scarce, exposing the hollowness of their falsehoods and fabrications. [The reference here obviously is not to mythological or inanimate gods, but to priests and others who exacted peoples' worship and thus set themselves up as Ilahs in opposition to the True Ilah. A. A. Maududi] (Quran 46:27-28)

And wherefore should I not give my worship to Him who created me and to Whom all of you will return? Should I take for myself ilah other than Allah Who, should He Who is also Ar-Rahman wish me any harm, will avail me naught by their intercession, nor will they be able to come to my rescue? (Quran 36:22-23)

And those who have taken others than Allah as protectors or helpers say, "We do not worship them except that they may bring us closer to Him." Allah will decide for them on the Day of Judgement regarding that in which they differ. (Quran 39:3)

And they worship other than Allah those who have power neither to harm nor benefit them, and they say that they are their intercessors with Him. (Quran 10:18)

What we learn from these verses is, firstly, that it was not that the Arabs believed their

ilahs to account for the whole of divinity among themselves or that there was no Supreme Being over and above them. They quite clearly believed in the existence of such a Being for whom they employed the special Proper name of ''Allah." As for their ilahs, their belief consisted essentially of the concept that they enjoyed some share in the divinity of the Supreme God, that their word carried some weight with Him, and that their intercession could result in some gains or ward off some harm or loss. It was on these grounds that they regarded them as ilahs besides Allah and, considering their precept and practice, we may say that it was the belief about someone to have power to intercede with God, the act of addressing of prayers to him for help, the performing of certain devotions indicative of respect and reverence and adoration, and the making of offerings, that constituted in their terminology, the treating of Him as ilah.
And God said: "Do not make two ilahs; there is but one ilah; So, fear Me alone." (Quran 16:51)

And (Ibrahim said to them): I fear not those you associate with God. Any harm can come to me only if He should will it, and not otherwise (through any or all of your supposed gods). (Quran 6:81)

(And said Hud's people to him:) All we think of you is that you are under the curse of someone or other of our ilahs. (Quran 11:51)

According to these verses, the Arab belief about their ilahs was that if they should give them any cause for offence or should otherwise be deprived of their favors and attentions, they would suffer epidemics, famine, lose of life and property, or other calamities.

They made their religious scholars and rabbis their rabbs instead of Allah, and Jesus son of Mary too into one, although they had been told to worship but one ilah only, besides Whom there is no ilah at all. (Quran 9:31)

Have you noticed the man who has made his selfish desires his ilah? Can you assume any responsibility about such a one? (Quran 25:43)

And in this wise did the supposed gods of pagans make infanticide appear an approved act in their eyes. (Quran 6:138)

What! Have they partners in godhood who have established for them some religion without sanction from Gods? (Quran 42:21)

Here we have yet another concept of ilah very different from those dealt with above. Here there is no element of the supernatural. The ilah here is some human being, or man's own selfish ego or selfish desires. No prayers are offered to it, nor is it regarded as being in a position to will any harm or benefit to someone nor is it looked to for help or succour. It is an ilah in the sense that its dictates are accepted and obeyed to such extent that that which it declares to be permitted or prohibited is treated as such, and it is deemed to have an inherent right to make us do or not do certain things, with no higher or superior authority whose approval might be necessary for its orders or which

might be appealed to against them.

The first verse we have quoted here (Quran 9:31) speaks of religious scholars and rabbis having been made into ilahs. We get a very lucid explanation of this in Hadith. Hazrat 'Adi bin Hatim once asked the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, about the verse, and in reply the Prophet told him that whet was characterized as taking as ilahs was the practice of accepting as permitted or prohibited anything pronounced as such by the scholars or rabbis, without caring to ascertain what God had actually said about it.

As for the second verse, (Quran 25:43) the meaning is clear enough. He who obeys only the dictates of his selfish desires or inclinations or, rather regards his personal views as the only law, in effect makes his self his ilah instead of God.

The last two verses use the word shuraka which we have translated as supposed gods or partners, in godhood, but although the word ilah has not been used, the implication clearly is that to treat any beings, etc., as shuraka amounts, in effect, to believing them to have a share in divinity. The import of these verses is that those who regard any custom or rule or practice as permissible although it has no divine sanction, are guilty of treating the originators of the custom, etc., as having a share in divinity, i. e., of treating them as ilahs.

The Criterion for Godhood

There is a clear logical inter-connection between all the different concepts of ilah set out above. Whosoever regards any other person or being to be his helper or patron in the supernatural sense, or capable of solving his problems or fulfilling his needs, of hearing and granting his prayers, or of doing him harm or good, does so only because he believes that Person or being to enjoy some measure of authority in the management of the universe.

Similarly, if a person's avoidance of certain actions or performance of others is governed by the hope or fear that they would win him the pleasure or displeasure of some other person or being, he does so obviously because of belief that that person or being possesses some kind of supernatural authority in shaping the affairs of men. As for him who believes in God and yet turns to others for the fulfillment of his needs, he too can do so only because he believes them to have some share in God's authority. And, lastly, no different is the case of the person who accords the status of law to the commandments of someone other than God, and binds himself to obey the injunctions or prohibitions of that someone, for he in effect thereby accords him supreme authority. We can therefore safely conclude that the essence of godhood is authority, whether it is conceived as sovereignty of a supernatural kind over the whole universe, or on the basis that man is bound by God's law in his worldly life and that all of His injunctions are to be complied with because they emanate from Him.

The Qur'anic Approach

It is this very concept of authority on the basis of which the Qur'an expends the whole force of its argument in rejecting the claims to godhood of all others than God, and

affirming it to vest exclusively in Him. It categorically asserts that there is only One Being in the heavens and the earth Who possesses and exercises all the powers and all the authority. All Creation is His, and subservient to Him, all grace and blessings flow from Him alone, His alone is the Word, and in Him alone vest all power and authority. Everything that exists, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by the laws made by Him and is, to that extent, subservient and submissive to Him, willingly or unwillingly. No one besides Him is possessed of any such authority, nor does anyone else dispose of the affairs of the universe. No one else knows the secrets of the Creation or its organization or the manner of its proper management. Nor, lastly, does anyone have the least share in His Sovereignty and Authority. Therefore, the only reality is that there is no ilah but He and, this being so, anything that men do on the supposition of anyone else being an ilah in any sense whatsoever is by its very nature utterly wrong, whether it be the act of praying to someone, seeking refuge with him, turning to him with hope or fear, seeking his intercession with God, or treating him as the final authority. All such relationships which people establish with others ought to exist solely and exclusively with Allah Almighty, because He alone is the Sovereign of the Universe.

Let us now see the Qur'anic treatment of the matter in some detail:

And He alone is the Ilah in the heavens and the Ilah in the earth; and He alone is the all-Wise, the all-Knowing (that is, He alone possesses the wisdom and the knowledge required for governing such a Domain). (Quran 43:84)

Can He Who creates, and he who does not, be alike? Have you not sense to realize this simple fact? ...And those whom the people pray to other than Allah, do not create anything and are themselves creatures; your ilah is only one Ilah. (Quran 16:17-20)

O mankind: Call unto mind the grace of God unto you; is there any Creator besides Allah, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth; there is no ilah but He; how, then, are you deluded from Truth? (Quran 35:3)

Say (O Prophet): "Think you, if God took away your hearing and your sight, and sealed up your hearts (that is, hardened them to the acceptance of any sensible precept), which ilah is there, besides Allah, who could restore them to you?" (Quran 6:46)

And He is Allah--the God: no god there is but He; To Him alone is due all praise, in this world and the next; His alone is the Command and Sovereignty, and to Him alone will you be returned. Say (O Prophet): "Have you ever thought that, if Allah should make the night continue till Doomsday, which ilah is there besides Him who could bring you any light? Do you not hearken?" Say (to them, 0 Prophet): "Has it ever occurred to you that if Allah should make the day perpetuate over you till Doomsday, who is the ilah other than He who can give you back night that you may rest in it? Do you not see?" (Quran 28:70-72)

Say (O Prophet): "Call upon the others whom you fancy, besides Allah; they do not own even an atom in the heavens or on earth; no sort of share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper to God. No intercession can avail with Him, except where He

himself permit it in anyone's favor..." (Quran 54:22-23)

He (God) created the heavens and the earth with Truth; He makes the night overlap the day and the day overlap the night; He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law); each one follows a course for a time appointed... He created you all from a single person (that is, brought human life into existence); then created out of him his mates; and sent down for you eight heads of cattle in pairs; He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness; such is God, your Lord and Creator; to Him belongs all dominion; there is no god but He; how then, do you get turned another way?" (Quran 39:5-6)

Who is it who has created the heavens and the earth, and who sends down rain from the sky? Yea, with it We cause to Brow well-planted orchards full of beauty and delight; it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. Can there be another ilah besides Allah? Nay, they are a people who swerve from reality. Who has made the earth firm to live upon, made rivers in its midst, act thereon mountains immovable, and made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water? Can there be another ilah besides Allah? Nay, most of them know not. Who listens to the (soul) distressed when it calls to Him, and who relieves its suffering, and make you (mankind) inheritors of the earth-that is, gives you authority to utilize your purposes? Can there be another ilah besides Allah? Little it is that you heed. Who guides you through the depths of darkness on land and sea, and who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, of His Mercy in the form of rain? Can there be another ilah besides Allah?--High is God above what they associate with Him! Who originates Creation, then repeats it, and who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? Can there be another ilah besides Allah? Say, "Bring forth your arguments, if you be in the right" (Quran 27:60-64)

He (is the One) to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; no son has He begotten, nor has He a partner in His dominion; it is He Who created all things, and ordered them in due proportion. Yet have people taken, besides Him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created, that have no control over harm or good to themselves; nor can they control Death nor Life nor Resurrection. (Quran 25:2-3)

To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He had no consort? He it is Who created all things, and He alone has full knowledge of all things; That is God, your Lord! No god there is but He, the Creator of all things; Then give your worship to Him; And He it is Who looks after the safety and well-being of all. (Quran 6:102-103)

Yet are there men who take (for worship) others besides God as equals (with Him). They feel the love for them which they should for God. If only the unrighteous could but see. Behold, they would seethe penalty: (they then will see) that to God belongs all power, and God will strongly enforce the Penalty. (Quran 2:165)

Say (O Prophet): "Do you see what it is you invoke besides God? Show me what it is they have created on earth, or have they a share in the heavens? ...And who is more

astray than one who invokes besides God such as will answer him not (though he call to him till) the Day of Judgement" (Quran 46:4-5)

If there were, in the heaven and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to Allah, the Lord of the Mighty Throne: High is He above that they attribute to Him. None there is who can question Him for His acts, but they (certainly) yet will be questioned for theirs. (Quran 21:22-23)

No son did God beget, nor is there any god alone; with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created and some would have lorded it over others! (Quran 23:91)

Say (O Prophet): "If there had been other gods with Him as they say-behold, they would certainly have sought ways for capturing His Throne. Glory to Him! He is High above all that they say! --Exalted and Great (beyond measure). (Quran 17:42)

It will be seen that there is one central idea running through all these verses, and that is that godhood and authority are inextricably interconnected and are, in essence and significance, one and the same thing. He who has no authority can be no god, and it is but fitting that he should not be so. And He Who has all due authority, He alone can be, and ought to be, God, because all the needs which one might refer to a god, or the experiencing of which might turn one's thoughts to someone supposedly gifted with divinity can only be fulfilled if the person or being involved has in fact the power and the authority to be able to meet them. Hence, we must conclude that it is meaningless to regard anyone without the necessary power and authority to have any part of godhood: it is absolutely contrary to reason and reality, and it is quite absurd as well as useless to turn to these for help.

The full argument of the Holy Qur'an, based on this central idea will be clear from the following premises and the deductions which it sets forth:

1. The fulfillment of the needs of human beings, the removal of their distress, the grant to them of refuge or protection, the extension of any needed help or assistance, their bringing up or preservation, and the acceptance of their prayers- none of these matters are so simple as people seem to assume them to be and hence mistakenly regard them as within the competence of human beings. All are dependent, inextricably and ultimately, upon the creative power and the controlling and managing authority being exercised over the entire universe by its One and only Lord and Master. Even the smallest need depends, for its fulfillment, on the combined results of a vest multitude of factors. Take for example the provision of just one glass of drinking water, or even just one grain of wheat used by men for food. Neither would come about but for incalculable and multifarious and, in many cases, get hidden activity on the part of the sun and the earth and the oceans and the winds. Therefore, the authority or power which is actually required for listening to our prayers is no ordinary authority but, rather, super-extraordinary and unique authority or power, not less than that required for creating the heavens and earth and for ordering the movement of

the heavenly bodies and of the winds and of causing rain, and so on-- in short, that needed for governing the entire universe itself.

2. This authority is indivisible. It is not possible that, while the control over creation should rest with one authority, that of providing for its food and drink should be with someone else; or that-the sun should be -under the control of one authority and the earth that of another; or that while one has the power to create, that of preserving health or causing illness should be possessed by another and that of ending life rest with still another. Had there been such division of authority and power, there would certainly-have been utter confusion and chaos in the universe and it could never have ordered the way it has been operating all along. Hence, it is essential that all authority and power should and does vest in one, central authority, in One Sovereign.
3. Since all authority and power vests in one Sovereign only, with no-one else having the least share in it, it must equally logically follow that godhood is special and exclusive to Him alone, and in this too there is absolutely no share. Nobody other than He has the power to listen to men's plaints or grant any of their prayers, grant them refuge and protection, be their helper and patron, or do them good or harm. Therefore, whatever be anyone's conception of ilah, there is no ilah but He, so much so that there is no ilah even in the apparently less important sense of someone being close enough to God to be able to intercede with Him. No-one has the least power or authority to interfere with His rule over His universe or His ways, and it is entirely up to Him whether to accede to, or reject, any intercession because no-one-unlike the viziers or ministers of earthly monarchs--occupies any position or status which would lend weight enough to his word.

It is also of the essence of the Unity of the Supreme Authority that all the various manifestations of sovereignty or over-lordship should, ultimately, he centered in one and only one Supreme Sovereign, and not even the tiniest factor of such authority should vest in anyone else. Since God is the Creator, and no-one else has had a share in the act of Creation, and since He alone is the Provider and no-one else shares this attribute with Him, and since He alone is the Controller and Administrator of the entire system of the Universe, and there is none to share these capacities with Him, it follows that He alone should also be the one to lay down the law, and that His word, and no-one else's should prevail, for there is no reason at all why anyone else should have a share here either. Just as if also is wrong, in principle and in fact, for anyone else to listen to others' prayers and expect to deliver them from distress and be their protector, in just the same way is it wrong for anyone else to be the absolute authority and the sovereign and to have any intrinsic authority to legislate for mankind. Whether it be creation, or providing of sustenance, the giving or taking away of life, the ordering of the sun and the moon and the heavenly bodies, the bringing of the night to overlap the day and of the day to overlap the night, the ordaining of peoples' destinies and the apportionment of their lots, or being ruler or monarch, or laying down the law or indicating the right and the wrong, all are different facets of a single, autocratic authority and sovereignty which is absolutely indivisible. If anyone regards the word of someone else to be deserving of obedience without any sanction from God, he is as much guilty of the offence of shirk as the one who prays to or worships someone other than God. And if someone regards himself as the lord and master and absolute

monarch of any part of the earth in the political sense, his act too amounts as much to a claim to godhood as it would if he were to tell people that he was their helper and patron and guardian in the supernatural sense. [The Translator feels tempted, at this stage, to point to the fact that all those who indulge in such pretensions turn out invariably to be the worst oppressor, and exploiters of human beings, and the farther they are from belief in God, the more this happens to be the case. On the other hand, the more a ruler is God-fearing the greater is his beneficence towards not only his own people but even towards his enemies Abu Asad] That is why the Qur'an emphasizes, wherever it speaks of creation or of the destinies of creatures or the management of the universe, that:

--To Him belongs the ultimate dispensation of men's affairs (and of other things in creation too) - His is the Kingdom--

--There is no sharer in His Suzerainty--

All of which clearly shows that godhood includes monarchy and rulership. And it is also that Tawheed necessarily requires that in this sense too no-one should be believed to have any share with God:

Say (O Prophet): O God! You are the Lord of all the Domains; It is You who grant kingdom to whom you please; and take it away from whomsoever You will; It is You who confer honor on whomsoever You please, and take it away from whomsoever You will. (Quran 3:26)

High and Mighty is Allah, the True Sovereign; then, is no ilah but He, the Lord of the Sublime Throne. (Quran 23:116)

Say (O Prophet): I seek refuge with Him who is Rabb of all mankind, the Sovereign of all mankind, and the Ilah of all mankind. (Quran 114:1-3)

And then there is another verse which makes the point even clearer:
The Day when the secrets of everyone of them will be laid bare; when it will become manifest to men that none of their actions is hidden from God, the call will go out: To whom belongs the Dominion this Day? And the answer will invariably be: To none but Allah alone, Allah Whose power and authority transcend that of all others. (Quran 40:16)

This verse is excellently explained in a Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmed (R) on the authority of Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with both) that, on one occasion the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) stated, in the course of a sermon, that: God will take both the heavens and the earth in His hand, and will proclaim to all before Him: “I am the King; I am the Mighty one: I am the Self-exalted one; Where are the people who used to style themselves kings upon the earth, those who called themselves mighty, and who were 'their Majesties?”

Hadrat Abdullah (with whom Allah be pleased) narrates that while the Holy Prophet

(peace be upon him) was repeating these words, his body trembled so much in awe of Allah Almighty that we were really afraid that he might fall from the pulpit.

CHAPTER 2

RABB

The General Meanings [We have omitted the numerous examples of usage, as one finds them in the lexicon, and which Maulana Maududi gave in the original in great detail because they may not interest the English reader end in any case do not matter except for some crass doubter-Or someone bent on finding fault simply because it is Maulana Maududi who is saying something. Abu Asad]
The three radicals of this word are the letters (r, b,b) and the basic meaning is to bring up. If we take into account the wider meaning of the root word and its various derivatives, we find that it has following connotations:

1. One who brings up, rear, fosters or nourishes, or is responsible for doing all or one or more than one of these;

2. Guardian, patron; one who supervises or is responsible for carrying out improvements;

3. One who occupies a central or focal position, who himself gathers people round himself of his own or round whom people gather out themselves;

4. Leader, head, chief, or lord; one whose word is obeyed, and whose supremacy or overlordship acknowledged, and who has authority to dispose of men or things;

5. Owner; master.

Qur'anic Uses of the Word

In the Qur'an the word is used in all of the above meanings, sometimes in only one sense, sometimes in two, and sometimes in more, or even all the five, as the following examples will show:

(i) And Yousuf (Joseph) said (to Potiphar's wife, when she tried to seduce him): May God forbid! He is my Rabb [Many commentators have taken this word, as used here, to mean "master; v and to refer to Potiphar. I, however, hold differently. According to my thinking, the pronoun "who" is related to its immediate antecedent, "Allah" (God) and I think it is unnecessary straining of the sense to seek to relate it to a person who is sot mentioned at all. A. A. Maududi] Who has provided handsomely for me and I shall not behave as an ingrate sinner. (Quran 12:23)

(ii) (And Ibrahim said to his people:) (These gods whom you worship) they are enemies to me; not so Allah, the Rabb of all the worlds, Who created me, Who gives me guidance, Who gives me food and drink, and Who, when I am ill, restores me to health. (Quran 26:77-80)

(iii) And there is not any good thing except that it comes from Allah, and whenever any mishap befalls yen, it is to Him you turn in your distress; but when He has removed it, there are those among you who associate others with their Rabb (as having also contributed to your provision or health). (Quran 16:53-54)

(iv) Ask them (O' Prophet): Should I seek any rabb other than Allah and He the Rabb of all creation? (Quran 6:165)

(v) He is the Rabb of the East and the West; there is no deity but He, and so take Him as the ultimate Disposer and Arbiter of all your affairs. (Quran 73:9)

(vi) He is the Rabb of all of you, and it is unto Him that you shall return. (Quran 11:34)

(vii) And then shall your return be to your Rabb. (Quran 39:7)

(viii) Say (O' Prophet) Our Rabb will gather and then decide between us, your group, and ours together. (Quran 34:26)

(ix) And there is not an animal in the world, or a bird which flies on two wings but all form parts of communities like you; We have not omitted any detail about them in the Book of destiny; and they too will all be gathered unto their Rabb. (Quran 6:38).

(x) And the Trumpet shall be sounded when, behold, they will all rush out from their graves (or wherever their "Last Remains" be) towards their Rabb. (Quran 36:51)

(xi) They (the Jews and the Christians) made their scribes and their monks their rabbs instead of Allah. (Quran 9:31)

(xii) And (let us also agree that) let not either of us (that is either you the people of the Book, or we, the Muslims) take anyone other than Allah to be our rabb. (Quran 3:64)

In the last two verses, the actual word used in the original is arbab, which is the plural of rabb, and which is employed in respect of those religious leaders, etc., whom different people had raised to the position of final authority, whose word was unquestioningly accepted as law, and who were regarded as having, so to say, a sovereign, inherent right to lay down what might, or might not, be done.

(xiii) (And Yousuf said to his two fellow prisoners): As to one of you he (will be freed and reinstated and) will (again) serve his rabb (lord, master) as wine bearer ... and to the one whom he thought to be likely to be freed, he said: “Speak of me to your rabb (Pharaoh), your master" but Satan made the man forget to mention him (Yousuf) to his rabb (Pharaoh, his master), (Quran 41:42)

(xiv) And when (Pharaoh's) messenger came to Yousuf, he said: Go back to your rabb (lord, Pharaoh), and ask him what transpired in the case of the women who cut their hands; verily (He who is) my Rabb (God) is fully aware of their wives. (Quran 12:50)

In the verses quoted at (xiii) and (xiv) Hazrat Yousuf employed the word rabb in respect of the Pharaoh because, since the Egyptians did in fact believe him to possess absolute sovereignty and the right to lay down the law and his word could not be questioned, this in effect amounted to their treating him as their rabb in the full sense of the word, that is, a god. As against this, however, Hazrat Yousuf regarded Allah alone as the Rabb, and made this clear by saying " My Rabb."

(xv) So (the Meccans) ought to worship the Rabb (lord, master) of this House-(The Ka'aba) (that is,) He Who has provided for their sustenance and relieved them of their fear and ensured their peace and safety. (Quran 106:3-4)

(xvi) Glorified be your Rabb (O' Prophet), the (Rabb, i.e.,) Fountain-head of all honour and authority, Who is free of the taint of all the faults and shortcomings they attribute to Him. (Quran 37:108)

(xvii) So glory be to Allah, the Rabb (Master) of the Mighty Throne, Who is free of all that they attribute to Him. (Quran 21:22)

(xviii) Ask them (O Prophet): Who is the rabb (Master) of the seven heavens and the rabb (Master) of the Mighty Throne? (Quran 23:86)

(xix) He, Who is the Rabb (Master) of the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, and the Rabb (Master) of all that the sun shines upon. (Quran 37:5)

(xx) And verily He is the Rabb (Lord, Master) of Sirius also. (Quran 53:49)

False Notions about Rububiyyah

The above examples clearly bring out the meanings of the word rabb, and we may now proceed to look at those false notions which existed among the misguided tribes and people about rububiyyah (that is, the qualities and attributes of one who is a rabb) which the Qur'an sought to refute, and what are the beliefs that the Qur'an advocates. This can perhaps best be done by taking up, one by one, the cases of those particular nations or people who find mention in the Qur'an, and thus get a clearer idea of the wrong notions which they entertained.

Hazrat Nuh's People

The earliest of such people dealt with in the Qur'an were those among whom Hazrat Nuh (Noah, peace be upon him) was raised as Prophet. It is clear from the Qur'an that these people did not deny the existence of God, cf. the following comment about him by their leaders:

He is but a man like any of you, who only wants to establish his own hold over you. If God had really wanted (to send any messenger) He would surely have chosen angels instead. (Quran 23:24)

Nor did they deny that Allah was the Creator of the universe and the Rabb in the first and second senses of the word. Among the exhortations to them by Hazart Nuh were:

He is your Rabb, and unto Him shall you be returned. (Quran 11:34)

Seek the forgiveness of your Rabb, (for) verily He is Oft-Forgiving. (Quran 71:10)

Do you not see how, Allah has made the seven heavens one above the other, and made the moon a light in their midst, and the sun a (glorious) lamp? And (it was) Allah (Who) created you from the earth. (Quran 71:15-16)

It is to be noted that no one says in reply that they do not believe Allah to be their Rabb or that He did not create the earth and the heavens and themselves, or that He was not managing the affairs of the universe.

Nor, may it be added, did they deny Allah's being their Ilah either. That is why Hazrat Nuh, in asking them to return to the ways of God, said, "You have no Ilah but He" (7:58), whereas if they had believed otherwise, what he would have said would have been: "Make Allah your ilah."

This therefore naturally raises the question as to what in fact was the basic dispute between Hazrat Nuh and his people, and it seems from the Qur'an that there were two main points of difference, as follows:

(i) What Hazrat Nuh wanted was that they should give their worship, in the full sense of the word, wholly to Allah, the Creator and Cherisher of the universe (Rabb-al-'aalameen), because He alone was the Provider and the only Ilah. There was no other being who could grant their prayers and give them aid and comfort, and therefore He alone deserved their full and entire submission and supplication, cf: O' my people, give your 'ibadah to Allah, (for) you have no ilah but He. And I am a messenger unto you from the Rabb of all the worlds, and convey to you the messages of my Rabb. (Quran 7:59-60). The people, however, were adamant that, notwithstanding Allah's being the Rabb of all the worlds, there were other gods too who had a share in the affairs of the world, who too could answer some of the prayers, and whom too therefore they could and would continue to regard as ilahs, cf:

And they said: Abandon not your gods ; abandon neither Wadd nor Suwa, neither Yaguth nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr. (Quran 71:23)

(ii) The other was that they regarded Allah as the Rabb only to the extent of believing in Him as the Creator, the Lord of the earth and the heavens, and the Supreme regulator of the affairs of the universe, but did not agree that His Sovereignty extended also to such matters as morality and moral principles, social relations, culture, politics, and other worldly affairs. They did not acknowledge Him as the only rightful and ultimate source of law in such matters, in which they actually behaved as commanded by their chiefs and priests. Thus according to them the status of rabbs is that, in such matters, it was their word, which was the law. Hazrat Nuh protested that rububiyyah was not a thing which could be split apart and distributed, and that they must regard Allah as the Rabb in all the different meanings of the word, and follow all of His laws

and commandments, conveyed through himself as His accredited representative:

I am to you an apostle worthy of all trust. So fear God, and obey me. (Quran 26:107-108)

The 'Aad People

The next in line were the 'Aad. They too did not deny the existence of God, or His being the Ilah but at the same time they too believed in Him as the Rabb to the same extent and in the same sense as had Hazrat Nuh's people. And so the points of disagreement between them, and the Prophet sent to them, Hazrat Hud, were the same too:

And to the Aad (We sent) their brother (that Is kinsman) Hud, who said to them :

"O' my people, give your 'ibadah to Allah (because) there is no ilah but He; will yon not fear Him?"...(And) they said: "Have you come to us to make us give all of our 'ibadah to Allah alone, exclusively, and give up those to whom our ancestors used to give theirs?" (Quran 7:65-70)

They said: "If our Rabb had wanted, He would have sent down angels (instead of you, a human like us)". (Quran 41:14)

These then were the 'Aad, who refused to obey the commands of their Rabb, who did not obey His messengers, and who (instead) obeyed every despotic transgressor (against Truth) (Quran 11:59)

The Thamud

Then there were the Thamud, the worst transgressors after the 'Aad. Basically, their deviation was the same as of the people of Hazrat Nuh and the 'Aad. They also believed in the existence of Allah and His being the Ilah and the Rabb but they did not agree that He was the only ilah, that He alone was worthy of all 'ibadah, and that He was Rabb in all the senses of the word. They insisted that there were others, besides Allah, who too could accept prayers, grant favours, and remove distress, and in moral and cultural matters they took their law from their chiefs and priests instead of following Divine guidance. It was this which made them into a tragically misled people and brought down on them Allah's punishment:

And (O' Muhammud) if they turn away (and do not listen to what you say) then say to them: I am warning you of a punishment the like of that which visited the 'Aad and the Thamud, to whom Prophets came repeatedly telling them not to give their 'ibadah to any but Allah, and whose only reply was: 'If our Rabb had wanted, He would surely have sent down angels, (but since He did not), we reject the message which you bring'. (Quran 14:13-14)

And to the Thamud (we sent) their kinsman Saleh, who said to them, "O' my People: 'give your 'ibadah to Allah; you have no ilah but He."...They replied, "O' Saleh, we had great hopes of you (and now you spear strangely); Do you mean to forbid us to give our 'ibadah to those to whom our ancestors used to give their?" (Quran 11:61-62)

When their kinsman Saleh said to them: "Do you not fear (God)? I am verily an apostle worthy of trust where fore fear God, and obey me and not obey all the words of transgressors who cause strife in the land and who do not mend their ways." (Quran 26:142-143, 150-152).

The People of Hazrat Ibrahim and Namrud

Next in importance are the people of Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham, may peace be upon him), and the significance of their case is that it is commonly thought that their King, Namrud (Nimrod), did not believe in God but claimed himself to be God instead. The fact, however, is that he did believe in God, and also believed Him to be the Creator and the Regulator of the affairs of the universe, and his own claim to be a rabb was only in the third, fourth, and fifth senses of the term. Another common misconception is that these people had no belief in God nor in his being the Ilah and the Rabb, although in fact their beliefs on these points were little different from those of the people of Hazrat Nuh and the Thamud. They did believe in the existence of God, and also knew Him as the Rabb, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Nor, for that matter, did they deny His right to man's worship. Where they were mistaken was in regarding the heavenly bodies as partners with him in rububiyyah in the first and second senses of the term and hence in associating them with God to that extent. As for the third, fourth, and fifth meanings of the term, here it was their kings whom they treated as the rabbs. The Holy Qur'an is so clear on these points that it is surprising how the misconceptions just mentioned originated and came to be so widely accepted. Take for example the story of Hazrat Ibrahim's search for the truth as told in the Qur'an:

When night came upon him, he saw a star, and he said, "This is my rabb;" but when the star set, he said to himself, "I do not like those who set." When he saw the shining moon he said, "This is my rabb," but when the moon also set, he said "If my Rabb does not guide me, I am afraid I too will become one of those who have bone astray." Then, when he saw the sun he said, "This is my rabb; this is the biggest (of them all);" but when the son also set, he cried out, "O' my people, I disown all those whom you associate with God; I turn away from them all and towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and I shall not be of those who associate others with Him" (Quran 6:77-80)

The portions italicised clearly show that the people among whom Hazrat Ibrahim (on whom be peace) had been born did have a conception of a Being Who had created the heavens and the earth and of His being a Rabb as distinct from the heavenly bodies. And how could it be otherwise, considering the message of Hazrat Nuh, and that other Prophets had continued to be raised after him, in particular among related or neighbouring people, the 'Aad and the Thamud. One can therefore safely presume that Hazrat Ibrahim owed his belief in God as the Creator to his own people. What puzzled him, how- ever, even at the tender age at which the above incident occurred, was the validity of the belief in the heavenly bodies as being partners in divinity and hence worthy of men's 'Ibadah along with God. [It might be mentioned in this connection, that according to architectural excavations in Ur - which was Hazrat Ibrahim's home-it

seems that the people of that area worshipped the moon whom they called "Nannar." In the land next to theirs, it was the sun which was worshipped, and was called "Shammash." Hazrat Ibrahim's country had been founded by a King called Uranmuw, a word which was arabicised into Namrud, and this word later came to be the title of the Kings in just the same way as, for example, much later, the successors or Nazam-ul-Mulk, who founded the state of Hyderabad India, came to be called Nizams. A. A. Maududi] And it was his own search for the truth and His observation of the stars and the moon and the sun and of the phenomenon of their rising and setting, which, helped of course or strengthened by Divinely inspired intuition, provided the answer, and led him rightly to conclude that there is no Rabb at all other than the Creator of the universe. [Maulana Maududi has, to his Tafhim-ul-Qur'an also dealt with the point which puzzled some as to why, since the rising and the setting of the heavenly bodies is a daily phenomenon, the Qur'an says, - "When night came upon him...' and why did not Hazrat Ibrahim notice the phenomenon earlier; and, in older to get over the point, the story was made out that he had been born and brought up in a cave and that is why he had not seen the stars and the moon and the sun until the event described occurred. The fact, however, is that there are many daily occurrences which one sees but whose significance escapes one until, at some moment chosen by God, it suddenly strikes one, and then, afterwards, the whole world also accepts the same explanation. After all, the apple is not the only fruit which falls from a tree, and all the various fruits had surely been falling from trees-as also all other objects thrown up-for God alone knows how long, and yet it was left to Newton to infer the law of gravity. And surely no one can say that Newton had not himself before that seen any apple or other fruit to fall from a tree. Abu Asad] That is the reason why, when he had seen the moon to set, he had said he was very much afraid that if his Rabb, that is, Allah Almighty, did not give him His own guidance, he to too might fail to get at reality and be deceived by the heavenly phenomenon as had been hundreds of thousands of others around him.

When, later, he was ordained prophet, and began his mission of calling men to God, he ended one of his discourses to them with the words:

And why should I have any fear of those, whom you associate with God while you yourselves feel none at making them His associates even though He has given no sanction for making them sharers in His Divinity. (Quran 6:81)

On other occasions, he said:

I repudiate and reject all whom you pray to others than God (Quran 19:48)

The only rabb there is He, Who is the Rabb of the heavens and the earth, He Who creased them. Do you then give your 'ibadah to others than Him, who have not the slightest authority or power to do you any good or harm? (Quran 21:56-66)

Who are these you are giving your 'ibadah to? Wou1d you rather give it to ilahs whom you fancy as such? If that be so, what think you of God, the Rabb of all creation? (Quran 37:85-87)

(As for me and my fellow Muslims), we have nothing at all to do with you and all those others than Allah to whom you give your 'ibadah. We reject your ways as false, and there will henceforth ever be only hatred and hostility between you and us unless and until you change your creed and come to believe in Allah alone (as the 'Ilah and the Rabb) (Quran 60:4)

It is clear from these words that those addressed were not totally ignorant of God nor disbelieved in Him or that they had no idea of His being the Rabb of all creation and the Ilah. Where they went wrong was in assigning to others the role of partners in godhood and, in the first and second sense of the term, in Rububiyyah too. This is the reason why, in the whole of the Qur'an there is not a single address by Hazrat lbrahim which would show that he had been trying to convince his people of the existence of God or of His being the Ilah and the Rabb. His entire effort lay in emphasising that God alone is the Rabb and the Ilah, to the exclusion of all or any others in all the senses of both the words.

Consider, for example, the argument between him and Namrud, the king, which is described in the Qur'an as follows:

Do you (O' Muhammad,) know the story of the one who argued with Ibrahim regarding Him Whom Ibrahim believed to be his Rabb, - (argued) because His kingship, a gift from Allah to him, had given him pretensions! When Ibrahim said, "My Rabb is He, Whose power are life and death," he replied "I too have power over life and death." Then Ibrahim said to him "(Granted that that be so; but) Allah makes the sun rise in the East, so, (if you are a rabb) cause it to rise in the West," which completely nonplussed the disbeliever. (Quran 2:258)

The polemic here also appears, from the way it is described, to have been not as to whether God existed or not, but as to who it was whom Ibrahim regarded as his Rabb. The reason was, firstly, that the king came of a people who believed in the existence of God. Secondly, unless his senses had left him entirely, he could obviously not make so foolish a claim as to be the creator of the heavens and the earth or the one who made the sun and the moon to move in their orbits. All he claimed was that within his own domain he was the rabb. And this claim, be it added, was not in the first and second senses of the term, because rububiyyah in those senses was attributed to the heavenly bodies; the senses in which he claimed to be rabb were the third, fourth, and fifth, and that too within the confines of his own realm only. In other words, what his claim amounted to was: "I am the lord of this land. All its people are my bondsmen. I am the sovereign because they all acknowledge me as such, and my word is therefore law for them. There is no higher authority than mine." It is clear from the verses last quoted above that his claim rested solely on the pretensions he had given himself for being the king. When, therefore, he learnt that a youth by the name of Ibrahim (may peace be upon him) believed neither in the rububiyyah of the heavenly bodies in the supernatural sense nor in the king's in the temporal and social sense, he naturally felt surprised, and sent for him and asked as to who, after all, was the one whom he acknowledged as his Rabb. Hazrat Ibrahim's first answer was: "He who has power of life and death." But the significance of this was lost upon the king, who countered with

the claim that he too had the same power: he could cause anybody to be put to death, and could spare of the life of anybody he chose.

Then Hazrat Ibrahim gave the second reply which, in effect, meant: "I acknowledge only God as my Rabb. For me He alone is the rabb in all the senses of the term. How can there be any rububiyyah for anyone else when no one else can alter in the least the way the sun rises or sets?" This argument opened the king's eyes, and he at once realised that Allah being the Sovereign of the universe, his own claim to be a rabb was nothing but a false pretension. However, his selfishness and vested family interests overcame his better sense and, despite 'the dawning of Truth on him, he could not bring himself to climb down from the high status of being fully his own master and to follow the path he had been shown by God's Prophet. It is on this account that, after recounting the event, the Qur'an add: "And Allah does not show the right path to transgressors," that is, after having seen the Truth the king ought to have bowed to it but since he did not, and chose instead to continue his autocratic rule and proclaimed his word be the ultimate law, against his own real interests, God too did not show him further light, because He does not thrust His guidance on any who does not sincerely seek after the truth.

Lot's People

The next in historical order are the people of Sodom, the task of whose reformation was entrusted to Hazrat Ibrahim's nephew, Lot (may peace be upon both). From the Qur'an we know about these people too that while they neither denied the existence of God nor His being the Creator and the Rabb in the first and the second senses of the word, they refused to acknowledge Him as such in the third, fourth, and fifth senses, and also repudiated the authority of the Prophet Lot as His trusted representative to lay down the law for their conduct. What they wanted was to be left to do as they pleased, and this was their real crime and the reason for their bringing God's wrath upon their heads. This is what the Qur'an says about them:

When their kinsman Lot said to them, "Will you not fear God? Look! I am a trusted messenger to you (from God). Therefore (believe what I say and) try to save yourselves from Divine wrath, and do as 1 tell you, I ask no regard for myself, because my reward lies with God. Do you, unlike the whole of the rest of humanity, turn to boys (for your Sexual satisfaction) and leave aside the wives your Rabb has created for you for the purpose? Surely, you are the worst of wrong-doers". (Quran 26:161-166)

Obviously these words can have only been addressed to a people who did not deny the existence of God or His being the Creator and the Provider. And that is why they did not counter by asking who was God, or how could He claim to be the Creator, or how did He become their Rabb. What they did say instead was, "Listen, Lot, if you do not stop your preaching’s, you will surely find yourself turned out from the land." (Quran 26:167)

At another place, the matter is put in the following words:

And (we sent) Lot (to his people as Our messenger and) when he said to them, "You

commit an obscenity which no one in the world has ever committed before. You satisfy your sexual urge with boys, commit highway robberies, and openly indulge in obscenities in your gatherings". Their only answer was: If you are so right in what you say, then bring down the wrath of Allah upon our heads".
(Quran 29:28-29)

Can these words have been uttered by a people who did not believe in the existence of God'. Clearly, their real crime was not the denial of His being the Ilah and the Rabb but that, while believing in Him to be both in the supernatural sense, they refused to follow His law and to accept the guidance of His messenger in the moral, social, and cultural spheres.

Shu'aib's People

Next come the people of Madyan and of Aika (the ancient name of Tabuk), to whom Hazrat Shu'aib (peace be upon him) was sent as prophet. We know that these people were descendants of Hazrat Ibrahim (on whom be peace) and so there can be no question of their not knowing God of or not believing in him to be the Ilah and the Rabb. They were in fact a people who had originally been Muslims but whose beliefs as also conduct had become corrupted through the passage of time. It would even appear from the Qur'an, that they claimed to be believers, because Hazrat Shu'aib repeatedly says to them; "If you truly believe"; "If you truly are believers." An examination of his discourses and of their answers clearly shows that they both believed in Allah and acknowledged Him as the Ilah and the Rabb, but went wrong on two points. Firstly, in the supernatural sense they associated others with Him as also being ilahs and rabbs and 'so did not give Him their 'ibadah exclusively and, secondly, they held that His being the Rabb did not extend to His having authority to lay down the law for regulating moral, social, economic and cultural behaviour, or they claimed freedom of action for themselves so far as these spheres were concerned:

And to (the people of) Madyan We sent their kinsman Shu'aib (who said to them): "O my people, give your 'ibadah to Allah (alone), for there is no ilah but He; verily, there has come to yon clear guidance from your Rabb, so give people just measure and weight and do not deprive them of their rightful due, nor (by these means) cause mischief in the land after it has been purged of corruption; this is the better course for you if you be true believers... And if a group among you believe in the guidance with which I have been sent, and another one not, then wait till God decides between us, and He alone is the best of all judges. (Quran 7:85-87)

(And Shu'aib said to them): "O' my people, give full measure and weigh justly, and do not cause loss to people, nor go about creating mischief in the land; the profit left to you through God's grace is more beneficial for you, if yon (really) believe; and (of course) I am no guardian of your morals". All they could say was: "Does your praying to God (in your own special way) give you O' Shu'aib the right to tell us to give up those whose worship has come down from our ancestors, or that we do not conduct our business transaction, as we please? You are indeed the forbearing and right-minded one!" (Quran 11:85-87)

The words italicised bring out clearly that the error of these people lay in misunderstanding the scope of God's rububiyyah, which they thought had limited scope.

The Pharaoh and his People

Next, we come to the Pharaoh and his people, regarding whom there are even greater misconceptions than in the case of Namrud and his people. The view generally held is that the Pharaoh not only denied the existence of God but himself claimed to be God, that is, that he had become so misled as to presume to be the creator of the heavens and the earth, and that his people too were so bereft of reason as to unquestioningly subscribe to such claim. The Holy Qur'an and history both show, on the contrary, that there was little difference between his people and those of Namrud in regard to their beliefs about God as both the Ilah and the Rabb. The only difference was the existence of a racial bias against the Bani-Israel which prompted the Egyptians to refuse, to openly acknowledge God as the Ilah and the Rabb, although they knew that He existed, as do also many a professing atheist in our own day.

The facts are that, after being vested by the king with high authority, Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace) had striven to the utmost to bring the people to the path of Islam, and the impact of his efforts had lasted right down to the time of Hazrat Musa (peace be upon him). Even though everybody had not come to embrace the true faith, there was nobody after Hazrat Yousuf's time entirely ignorant of God's existence or of His being the sole Creator of the heavens and the earth. Not only that, but Hazrat Yousuf's teachings had also inculcated in everybody the notion of His being both the, ilah and the Rabb in the supernatural sense, so that there was none who denied His existence. As to those who had stuck to their beliefs, even their error consisted in associating others with Him. And the impact of these teachings had not quite died out even till the time of Hazrat Musa (Moses, on whom be peace) [If one were to believe in what is slated in the Old Testament, it would appear that about one-fifth of the population of Egypt had come to accept, over the course of time, the faith of Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace). The total number of the Israelities who left Egypt with Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) is stated to have been about two million, while the total population of Egypt armor at that time have been more than a hundred million. Unfortunately all these two million are referred to, in the Old Testament as the children of Israel, which seems impossible because, surely, the descendants or the twelve sons of Hazrat Yaqoob (Jacob, on whom be peace) cannot have risen to two million even in about four centuries. The only plausible inference one can draw from this is that a large number of non-Israelis too had accepted the religion of the Israelis-which, of course was, essentially, the religion of Islam-and had left the country along with the Israelis. (The number, incidentally, shows pointedly the extent of the tabligh work done by Hazrat Yousuf and his successors). A. A. Maududi]. This fact is clearly proved by the speech made by a Coptic noble at the court of the Pharaoh, who had become a Muslim but had not declared his faith openly and who, on learning of the Pharaoh's determination to have Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) put to death, protested boldly in the following words:

Would you people kill a person for the reason only that he says that his Rabb is Allah alone, and despite the fact that he comes to you with manifest signs from your Rabb?

If he lies, then upon him be his lies. And if be should be telling the truth, then surely some of what he warns you against is bound to smite you. Verily, Allah does not guide aright any who exceeds all limits in lying. True my people the land is yours, but who will save us if Allah's chastisement should come down upon us? I fear grievously that you may suffer a fate the like of that which overtook, mighty nations before, like the people of Nuh, the Aad and the Thamud, and others after them (who wont wrong)... And there was also the time that Yousuf came to yon with clear signs (from God) but you continued to harbour doubts , but when he died you said that Allah would not send another prophet after him. .. And, is it not strange, my people, that while I call you to the path of salvation you call me to the one which leads to (the) fire (of Hell)? What you would have me do is to commit kufr in regard to Allah, and to associate those with him regarding whom I know not for sure that they are His associates; My call to you is that you turn to the One (God) Who is the Mighty and the Oft Forgiving! (Quran 40:28-40)

This whole speech bears witness that despite the passing of several centuries, the impact of the great personality of Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace) had persisted and, due to his teachings, the Egyptians had not yet sunk so low in ignorance as to be entirely unacquainted with the existence of God or to not know Him as being the Rabb and the Ilah, or that He is the Lord and master of all Nature and that His wrath is something to be feared. The last sentence in fact clearly shows that they did not deny God's being the Ilah and the Rabb totally but that they erred in associating others with him.

The only thing which might tend to cast doubt on the above explanation is that, when Hazrat Musa use (on whom be peace) had announced to the Pharaoh that he and his brother Hazrat Haroon (Aaron, peace be upon him) had been sent to him as the messengers of the Rabb-al'aalameen (the Lord of the worlds), He had countered with the question, "And who might this Rabb-al-'aalameen be?" He had also ordered his minister, Haman, to build him a skyscraper that he might look at Hazrat Musa's Ilah from its heights, had threatened to put Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) in jail if he took anyone other than him (the Pharaoh) as his Ilah had caused it to be proclaimed to all the people throughout the land that he was their supreme rabb (obviously lest their beliefs be affected by Hazrat Musa's teachings), had told his nobles that he knew of no-one but himself to be their ilah, and so on. Utterances like these might no doubt give the impression that he denied the existence of God altogether, had no conception of Rabb-al-aalameen, and regarded himself as the only ilah (in the world).

The fact, however, seems to be that his whole attitude was inspired by his racial prejudices. Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace) had not only been the cause of the spread of Islam, but the prestige of his high office had also been instrumental in the Israelis' coming to occupy a dominant position in the land which they had held for three or four hundred years. Then germs of Egyptian nationalism had begun to sprout, until at last the Israelites were dethroned from their position and a nationalist Egyptian dynasty became the ruler. The new rulers did not stop at merely downgrading the Israelites. They also took deliberate steps to wipe out all vestiges of the times of Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace) and to revive the civilisation and culture of their

own former Age of Ignorance. Therefore, when against this background Hazrat Musa, an Israeli, presented himself as messenger from God, they naturally apprehended that the Israelis might recover their former prestige and dominance and they themselves lose their newly retrieved authority. It was because of these fears and the Egyptian's nationalist and racial prejudices and the consequent natural hostility between the two peoples that the Pharaoh attempted repeatedly to confuse and perplex Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) so as to abort his mission. When, for example, he asked, "And who might this Rabb-al-'aalameen be?" It was not that he did not know what the words meant or Who was referred to. He certainly did know, as his own words on other occasions show. For example, once, in trying to reassure his own people that Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) was not a Divine messenger, he raised the objection:

(And if he be a prophet), why have not golden bracelets been sent down for him, or why did not angels follow him in procession? (Quran 43:53)

Can such words have been uttered by a person devoid of any notion of God or the angels? On yet another occasion, the following words passed between him and Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace):

Then said (the Pharaoh) to him: “I can only think that you have lost your reason." (To which) Musa replied; "You know very well that it is none other than the Lord of the Worlds Who has sent down these manifest, signs, and I (on my part,) believe that you, O Pharaoh, are doomed." (Quran 17:101-102)

In another place in the Qur'an God describes the mental state of the Pharaoh's people in the following words:

And when our signs became absolutely manifest to them, they said: "This surely is magic." Inwardly, their hearts had become convinced (that it was not magic but the Truth), but they refused to acknowledge this out of sheer mischief and wilfull rebellion. (Quran 27:13-11)

Also:
Then Muss said to them: "Woe unto you; Forge not a lie against God; for (if you do) He will destroy you by chastisement; and whoever has committed forgery has only suffered frustration. On hearing which they began to dispute among themselves and held secret counsels, wherein it was said: "This surely is a pair of magicians aiming at driving you away from your land and doing away with your cherished traditions and way of life." (Quran 20:61-63)

They could only have begun to dispute, on being warned of Divine chastisement and of the punishment for forging lies, because there still endured in their hearts some remnants of the notion of God's greatness and might and some fear of Him. But when the ruling racist nationalists spoke of a possible political revolution in case they adopted the faith of Musa (on whom be peace) and raised the spectre of fresh Israeli domination over Egypt, their hearts became hardened once again, and they unanimously decided to defy both the Prophets.

This point having been settled, we can now easily get at the real basis of the dispute between Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) and the Pharaoh, see wherein lay the latter's error and of his people, and in what sense did he claim to be ilah and rabb. In this connection, the verses in the Qur'an which appear to be relevant, are set out below:

1. On one occasion the war-mongers among the courtiers asked the Pharaoh:

Would you give Musa and his people free rein to spread disruption in the land to give up your ilah? [Some commentators have read the word aalihatika in verse as ilahatika on the supposition only that the Pharaoh himself claimed to be the Lord of the world, and have interpreted the word ilaha to mean worship. In other words, they translate the verse to mean "to give up yourself and your worship". However, in the first place, this reading of the word is rare and contrary to the general reading. In the second, the very supposition on which it is based is wrong ab initio. In the third, ilaha can, besides worship, mean goddess also, and this word was in fact used in Arabia in the Age of Ignorance for the sun. We know that to the Egyptians it was the sun which was the supreme god, whom they called Ra, and the word Pharaoh actually meant descendant, or incarnation, of Ra, so that the Pharaoh, claimed to be incarnations of the Sun god Ra. A. A. Maududi] (Quran 7:127)

As against this, the one who had affirmed belief in Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace), said to the others:
What you want is that I deny God, and associate those with Him regarding whom I have no valid proof (of any divine status). (Quran 40:42)

When we study these verses against the background of what we know from archaeological research, we can only conclude that both the Pharaoh himself and his people associated some of their gods with the One God who is the only Rabb, in the first and second senses of rububiyyah, and gave their worship to them on that basis. Obviously, if the Pharaoh had claimed to be god in the supernatural sense, that is, if he had presumed to be the ruler of the entire universe and believed in none other than himself to be the ilah and the rabb of the earth and the heavens, he would not have needed to worship any god at all.

2. The Qur'an also reports the Pharaoh to have said:

(i) To his nobles: "(As for me) I know of no ilah for you except myself." (Quran 28:38)

(ii) To Hazrat Musa (peace be upon him): "If you take anyone other than me to be your ilah I shall surely throw you in prison." (Quran 26:29)

These words do not mean that the Pharaoh denied the existence of any ilah but himself. He meant only to reject the call of Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace). This call was to God not only as the Ilah in the supernatural sense but also as the Supreme Sovereign and the ultimate Law-giver in all matters whether political, cultural, or

social. The Pharaoh on the other hand held that there was no ilah but himself in political and cultural and social matters, and at the same time threatened Hazrat Musa that if he took anyone else as his ilah in this sense he would find himself in prison.

These verses also show, and this again is borne out both by history and archaeological discoveries, that the Pharaohs of Egypt did not stop at claiming absolute sovereignty but, by claiming kinship with gods, had also pretensions to a special sanctity, so as to further strengthen their holdover men's minds and hearts. In this, of course, they were not exceptional, because there have been many dynasties which too have, besides assuming absolute sovereignty, laid claim to a measure of divinity, and made it incumbent, on their subjects to perform various acts of worship before them. However, this was actually something of secondary importance only, because the real purpose was always to consolidate their own authority and the claim to possess a degree of divinity was only a means towards that end. And that is why the godhood of all these dynasties came forthwith to an end, in Egypt and elsewhere, the moment their temporal rule ended. If at all, the spiritual overlordship was transferred to the new occupants of the throne.

3. The Pharaoh's real claim was not to godhood in the spiritual, but in the political sense. It was in the third, and fifth senses of rububiyyah that he claimed to be the overlord of Egypt and its people, to be master of the country and all that there was in it, to the exclusion of all others and to have the absolute right to rule as he pleased. His alone was the supreme authority, and he alone the fountain-head of all cultural and social life in Egypt. None else had the right to speak in these matters, and to say what people might do, and what they might not. The basis for the claim, according to the Qur'an, was as follows:

And the Pharaoh proclaimed throughout Egypt:
"Am I not the lord of this land? And do not the rivers in this country flow under me? Do you not all see this (and believe in what) I say!" (Quran 43:51)

This was the same basis on which Namrud had rested his claim to be a rabb-“(He having pretentions of his own) disputed with Ibrahim as to He Whom the latter regarded as his Rabb and on the basis only that Allah had bestowed him with kingship"- and on the same basis too had the king who ruled Egypt during the time of Hazrat Yousuf (on whom be peace) held himself out as the rabb of his people.

4. The real dispute which lay between Hazrat Musa, (on whom be peace) and the Pharaoh and his nobles, etc., was that the former called the people to believe in no-one as being in any degree an ilah or a rabb, in any sense of these terms, except Allah, the Lord of the Worlds (Rabb-al-'aalameen), Who alone was the Ilah and the Rabb in the supernatural sense and in political social and cultural matters too. He alone was worthy of worship, and His Word alone was the Law. Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) also announced that it was none other than Allah Who had sent him to the Pharaoh and his people as His representative, to make known His Commandments through him. The reins of authority should therefore be in his hands and not in those of the Pharaoh (who, be it remembered, was a rebel against God). And this led the Pharaoh and his

nobles, naturally, to claim that the two brothers (Hazrat Musa, and Hazrat Haroon, may peace be upon both) wanted to dispossess them of their authority and to rule over the land themselves, to root out the existing creed and culture, and install their own:

And We indeed sent Musa with our Signs, and clear tokens of authority to the Pharaoh and his nobles but the people obeyed the word of the Pharaoh, though he (certainly) was not in the right. (Quran 11:96-97)

And We had previously put Pharaoh's people through a test; a noble prophet had come to them, and said to them: "Make over authority over Allah's creatures to me; 1 am to yon a Divine Messenger and worthy of all trust, and so be not arrogant against God, for I come to you with authority (which is) manifest." (Quran 44:17-19)

(And, O people of Makkah:) Verily We have sent to you a messenger, who will bear witness over you, in just the same way that We sent a messenger to the Pharaoh; then the Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger, and (for this) We seized hold of him most woefully. (Quran 73:15-16)

The Pharaoh asked: "(And, if you do not acknowledge either our gods or the Royal family to be your rabbs, then who, after all, is your Rabb?") "The same," replied, Musa, "Who gave everything in creation its own peculiar structure, shape, and qualities, and then taught man how to put them to his use." (Quran 20:49-50)

The Pharaoh asked, "And who might this Rabb-al- 'aalameen (Lord of the Worlds) be?" And Musa, replied: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them-if you were only to believe." Do you hear?" the Pharaoh asked those around him. "The Lord of all of you," added Musa, "and of all your predecessors too." "This (self-styled Divine) messenger," remarked the Pharaoh, is verily a mad person." "The Lord of the East and of the West," retorted Musa, "and of all that is between them if you only had the true understanding". To which the Pharaoh could only reply, "Take heed, O' Musa If you dare take anyone other than me as your ilah, you certainly shall find yourself in prison." (Quran 20:23-29)

The Pharaoh asked. "Have you come to us that you should drive us out of our land, with (the help, or the threat of the use of) your magic, O Musa?" (Quran 20:57)

And the Pharaoh said "Let me do with Musa as I wish - to have him put to death-and then let him call to his Rabb to save him, for I very much fear that he will change your creed or disturb the peace of the land." (Quran 40:26)

They (the Pharaoh's nobles) said: "They (Musa and Haroon) are both (nothing but) magician, who wish to drive you out of your land by the force of their magic, and to do away with your most excellent way of life." (Quran 20:63)

The above verses bring out clearly the fact that in the land of the Nile too there prevailed the very same misconception with regard to rububiyyah as had existed among other peoples of old, and that the message of Hazrat Musa and Hazrat Haroon

(on whom both be peace) to the Egyptians was also the same as of the prophets before them to their own respective people.

The Jews and Christians

After Pharaoh's people, the next in historical order are the Israelites and those people who adopted the Jewish religion or Christianity. In their case, there can obviously be no question about their either not acknowledging the existence of God or not believing in His being the Ilah and the Rabb. The Qur'an itself affirms their belief in Him on the point and the question which therefore arises is of the particular error for which they were characterised in the Qur'an as "those who went astray". (Quran 1:7)
A brief answer is:
Say (O' Muhammed): "O' people of the Book: Do not exaggerate concerning your faith, and adopt not the wrong notions of those who have gone astray before you, who misled many others, and themselves too strayed from the straight path." (Quran 5:77)

From this, one may conclude that, in essence, the Jews and Christians too were guilty of the same error into which others had fallen earlier, and that in their case this arose out of exaggerated piety. Let us go into the matter in some detail, with the help of the Qur'an:

(i) And the Jews said: "Uzair (Ezra) is son of God, while the Christians said, "Isa (Jesus) is son of God." (Quran 9:30)

(ii) It was kufr on the part of Christians, to say that God was the same as Jesus son of Mary; though Jesus had himself said, for a fact, "O' sons of Israel, give your 'ibadah to Allah. Who is also your Rabb and my Rabb." (Quran 5:72)

(iii) Verily those who said 'that God is one of three, committed kufr, for there is but one Ilah and there is no ilah but He. (Quran 5:73)

(iv) And there will come a time (the Day of Judgment) when God will ask "O' Jesus, son of Mary, did you tell people to take you and your mother as ilahs besides Myself?" to which Jesus will reply, "Glory be to you! How could I have dared say that which I had no right to utter!" (Quran 5:116)

(v) It is not for any person that, after being given the Book, and being endowed with hikmah [Literally, this word means wisdom; but when used in reference to a Prophet, it means that special wisdom which comes automatically after investment with the office of Prophethood, and which enables the Prophet to understand and expound the implications, and requirements of the Divine Injunctions. A. A. Maududi] and invested with prophethood, he should go about telling people to give up God and instead give their allegiance and 'ibadah to him. Far more fitting it is that he should say: "Believe firmly in Allah as the Rabb (in every sense of the word), as you find it written in His Book, and as you learn of yourselves and teach others." Nor, again, is it for a prophet to tell the people to regard the angels and the prophets as rabbs. Would he enjoin kufr to you after you have become Muslims? (Quran 3:79-80)

What we learn from the relevant verses is that the first error of the Jews and Christians was to raise their Prophets, and saints, and the angel, etc., to the status of divinity out of exaggerated regard for them, to believe them to have a say in the ordering of the universe and its affairs, to worship and address their prayers to them, treat them as partners in rububiyyah and in godhood in the supernatural sense, and to believe that they could remit their sins and come to their rescue and protect them from misfortune and disasters.

Their second error lay in their making even their scribes and hermits into rabbs, besides God (cf.9:31). In other words, the people whose real function was to expound God's law to others, and to reform the people morally and spiritually to make their conduct conform to Divine precepts were gradually assigned authority to determine, on their own, what was to be treated as forbidden and what as permitted, without reference to what was said in the Book. They could forbid any practices they did not approve, and institute any others they fancied. And in this way both Jews and Christians fell into the same two basic errors as that into which the people of Prophets Nuh and Ibrahim (on whom both be peace), the 'Aadites and the Thamud and the people of Madyan and others had fallen earlier. Like them, they too made the angels and their religious leaders to be partners with God in Rububiyyah in the supernatural sense, and in moral, cultural and political spheres too. And so they began to take their cultural, economic, moral and political principles from human beings, disregarding the Divine injunctions, until they reached a stage about which the Qur'an says:

Have you noticed the people who were given a portion of the Book of God, but who (instead of making it the basis for their conduct), believed in jibt and taghoot? (Quran 4:51)

Say (O' Muhammad): "Shall I tell you who are worse as to their ultimate fate with Allah than even the fasiqs [A fasiq, according to the Qur'an is one who breaks his covenant with Allah, who severs the ties between Him and His creatures and between man and man, and who creates mischief upon earth (cf. note in Tafhim-ul-Qur'an. Vol.1. p.61. relative to 2-27-2). A. A. Maududi]. It is those who drew the curse of God upon them, those who invited His wrath, and of whom many were turned into apes and swine by His Command, and who gave their worship to taghoot; they are the lowest in degree, and the farthest astray from the straight path." (Quran 5:60)

The word jibt is a comprehensive term for all myths and superstitions, embracing such superstitious things as magic, the art of the occult, black magic, necromancy, witch-craft, soothsaying, divination, the belief in talismans or lucky stones or unlucky colours or numbers or natural phenomena, etc., or in the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs. As for taghoot, this term applies to every person, or group of persons, or organisation or institution which, instead of submitting to God and His Injunctions, rebels against them and virtually sets up himself or itself as god instead, or is so set up by people. So when the Jews and Christians committed the two errors indicated above, the result of the first was that different kinds of superstitious beliefs took hold of their minds and of the second that their scribes and hermits, etc., gradually came to assume

the same right to tell people what to do and what not as had been presumed by those who were open rebels against God.

The Meccan Pagans

Last of all, we come to the Meccans, to whom Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), was sent as God's Messenger and to whom therefore the Qur'an's message was immediately addressed. What was the nature of their error? Were they ignorant of God, or did they deny His existence, and was the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace), sent as God's Messenger to make them acknowledge His existence? Or did they deny His being the Ilah and the Rabb, and was it therefore the purpose of the Holy Qur'an to persuade them of His godhood and Rububiyyah? Did they hold that He was not worthy of worship and adoration, or did they disbelieve His being able to listen to their prayers and grant their supplications? Did they think that Lat, Manat, and Uzza and Hubal and their other supposed gods were the real creators, masters, planners and organisers and administrators of the universe and the providers for all the creatures in it? Were their gods, according to them, the sources of all law and moral and social codes? When we study the Qur'an, we find all such questions answered in the negative. The pagans of Arabia not only acknowledged the existence of God but they also believed Him to be Creator and Master of the universe as well as of their own gods, and also the Ilah and Rabb. It was to Him that they addressed all their prayers in the last resort, when all else failed, and they acknowledged His right to their worship and adoration. As for their gods, they believed them neither to be their own creators and masters nor of the universe nor able to provide guidance in the social and moral affairs of life, cf.

(i) Say to them O 'Prophet, "Whose is the earth and all who are in it? Tell me, if you know." Their reply will be: "It all belongs to Allah," Ask them then, "And still you do not listen?" Ask, “Who is the Rabb of the seven heavens and of the Mighty Throne," and they will say, "It is Allah." Ask them then, "And still you do not fear?" Ask, "Whose is the Sovereignty over everything, and who is it who grants shelter but against whose displeasure there is no protector? Tell me, if you know." And they will say, "Allah alone has this attribute." Ask them then, "If that is all so, what makes you go astray?" The fact indeed is that We have given them the Truth, but they practice falsehood. (Quran 23:84-90)

(ii) It is He, Allah, Who enables you to travel over the land and the seas; you board your ships and sail on them and rejoice at favourable winds and then, all of a sudden there comes a stormy gale, and the waves buffet the ship from all sides, and you find yourselves caught in a storm; you then pray to Allah, most devoutly, with hearts filled with faith in Him only and say, 'Deliver us from this storm, ('O Lord,) and we shall be Your truly grateful creatures." But when He has delivered you from the storm, there you go again, turning your back upon the Truth and spreading rebellion in the land. (Quran 10:22-23)

(iii) And when disaster overtakes you while on the sea, all those you worship other than God fail you, (and it is certainly He alone who delivers you), but when you are safe again upon the land, you turn away from Him. Truly, man is a rank ingrate! (Quran 17:67)

As to their beliefs about their gods, the Qur'an brings these out in their own words, as follows:

(i) Those who take others than God as protectors say: "We only give them of our worship that they may bring us closer to God (or intercede with Him)." (Quran 39:3)

(ii) And they say, "They (our gods) are our intercessors with God." (Quran 10:18)

That they had no pretensions about their gods being in any way capable of providing guidance in the affairs of life, is clear from the following verse:

Ask them, O' Prophet: "Is there any among those you associate with God, who will guide you towards Truth?" (Quran 10:34)

But when the question is asked it begets nothing but silence. None dares answer that Lat, or Manat, or Uzza, or any of the other gods provide guidance to right thinking and conduct, or teach the ways of justice, peace and harmony, or provide knowledge of basic realities of the universe. And so, receiving no reply, the Qur'an makes the Prophet (on whom be peace) add:

(So much then, for you gods. As for) Allah, (He) indeed guides to Truth. And so, who is worthier of being obeyed-He who guides towards Truth, or he who does nothing of the kind? What is wrong with you? Why can't you be sensible, and how do you come to your baseless conclusion? (Quran 10:34)

This being so, we again come up against the question as to what was their real error about rububiyyah which was sought to be removed through the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace), and for which purpose Allah revealed the Holy Qur'an. When we look into the Qur'an for an answer to this, we find that in their case too the basic errors were the same two which had occurred among those before them, viz.,

(i) Insofar as godhood and rububiyyah in the supernatural sense are concerned, they associated others with God, and thought that in some way or other the angels, the men of piety, and the heavenly bodies, had also a share in the realm of cause and effect. And that is why, in matters of worship, and making supplications, and seeking help, etc., they turned not only to God but also to those others they supposed to be gods.

(ii) As for mundane affairs like culture and politics, etc., they did not regard God as the Rabb with regard to such matters, but instead assigned the right to lay down the law to their priests, their chiefs, and the elders of their clans or tribes and followed their dictates.

As to the first, error, here is what the Holy Qur'an says:

And there are among men some who give their 'ibadah to Allah, as it were, on the verge; if good befalls them they are well content; but if it is trying circumstances, they

turn away-losers in this life and the next-a sheer and utter loss. Then, having turned away from Allah, they call to those who have no power to do them either harm or good- and this is straying far indeed, for they call those for help whose being thus sought brings more loss than gain. How useless is the (supposed) helper, and how evil a companion! (Quran 22:11-13)

And instead of Allah they give their 'ibadah, to those who cause them neither profit nor harm, and they claim they are their intercessors with Allah. Ask them, O' Prophet, "Do you presume to tell Allah of something of which you think He is not aware either in the heavens or in the earth? Glory be to Him, and He is free of what they associate with Him." (Quran 10:17-18)

Say, (O' Prophet:) "Do you give your 'ibadah to those other than Allah who have power neither to do you aught of harm or of good, while Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing?" (Quran 5:76)

And when in distress man calls to his Rabb whole heartedly, but when He has bestowed His favour upon him, he forgets that which had made him pray to Him, and begins to treat others as co-partners with Him, as if they too had a share in his change of fortune or as if their special powers or at least intercession alone brought it about, thus to mislead others from Allah's (True) Path. (Quran 39:8)

And any good thing of life you have is but the bounty of Allah and when any harm befalls you, it is to Him that you address your prayer, but when He has turned it away from you, there are some among you who begin to assign a share to others in your deliverance, to return ingratitude for Our favour. So be it, and do what you like, for soon will you know the outcome. These are the people who attribute to other, out of ignorance, a share in the granting of bounties which are Ours, wholly and solely. By God, (all) you (who do so) will (one day) certainly be taken to task for the falsehood you commit. (Quran 16:53-56)

As for the second error, this is the charge which the Qur'an makes in proof of it:

And in this wise was for many a pagan the slaying of their own children made to look a worthy act by those they associated with God, to lead them to their Doom and cause confusion in their religion. (Quran 6:138)

Obviously, the `associates' referred to here are not the idols or gods but those leaders and chiefs who had made the killing of one's own children seem like a noble act in the eyes of the pagans, and had thus contaminated this abominable act into the pure faith that had come down from Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Isma'il (may peace be upon both). And, further, these leaders are not characterised here as `associates' in the sense of their being regarded as having a say in the affairs of the universe, nor did the pagans worship or pray to them. Certainly, this was not so. But they are dubbed as associates in rububiyyah and godhood because the pagans treated them as having the absolute right to lay down the law, as they pleased, in cultural and social and moral and religious matters:

Have they taken for themselves supposed associates with God who have given them laws in the way of Deen [The "d" sounds like "th" in" the". Abu Asad], having no sanction from Allah? (Quran 42:21)

We shall discuss the full significance of the term deen later and comment also in detail on this verse, but what is clear here is that laying down of the law by the leaders and chiefs in those matters which formed part of deen, and the pagans' acceptance thereof as binding codes did constitute, in effect, the leaders and chiefs being treated as associates with Allah both in godhood and in rububiyyah.

The Message of the Qur'an

The foregoing detailed exposition of the misguided conceptions of various pre-Islamic people make it patently clear that from earliest times to the revelation of the Qur'an, none of those whom it mentions as the transgressors, the misguided, and the astray, actually denied the existence of God, or His being the Rabb and the ilah. All, however, went wrong in much the same ways in dividing the attributes of rububiyyah, in its five different senses, into two separate compartments.

Insofar as such attributes of Allah as His being the Cherisher, the Provider, and the Protector and Helper of the creatures in the transcendental sense were concerned, the people regarded them as something apart from the rest. And, although in this sphere they did regard Allah as the Supreme Rabb, they also believed that the angels and various gods, the genii, and invisible forces, the stars, and other heavenly bodies, the Prophets and saints and other holy men, also had different shares in this rububiyyah.

As for the remaining attributes, namely, Allah's being the Supreme Sovereign, the Fountainhead of authority, the Supreme Law-giver, and the Supreme Lord of all creation etc., the people either assigned these roles wholly to particular human beings or, while assigning them to God in theory, in practice treated the entire rububiyyah in moral, cultural, and political spheres as vesting in these beings.

It was for the task of removal of both these types of misconceptions that there were ordained all the different Prophets from time to time (may peace be upon them) and, finally, Allah sent Muhammad (peace be upon him), as His last Prophet. All of the Prophets called to man to believe that there was but one Rabb, that is, Allah, in all of the various senses of the word, and that rububiyyah was not divisible nor was any portion of it available to any creature. The management and control of the universe, they emphasised, was centered is One Authority only, the Authority Who alone had created it, entirely to His own Grand Design and purpose, and Who exercised both de jure and de facto rule over all its affairs, and no-one had any share either in the creation or the running of the universe. As the Centre of all authority, God alone was and is the Rabb, in all the senses of the word, both in transcendental matters and the temporal affairs of men. He alone was and is worthy of all worship, of being made the focus of all adoration and prayer. He alone listens to all prayers and He alone is worthy of our reliance and capable of providing for the needs of all too. He alone is at the same time the King, the Lord of the Universe and the source of all law and authority,

and He alone has therefore the right to lay down what is right and what is wrong and what ought or ought not to be done. It is in the very nature of things a misconceived notion to think of rububiyyah as something which could be split up into compartments. It is an essential, and exclusive attribute of Allah and; hence, obviously and necessarily indivisible.

This call of the various Prophets (on whom be peace), is brought out in the Qur'an in many a place, e.g.:

Verily, your Rabb is Allah (alone)-He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then established Himself on the Mighty Throne; He it is Who draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession; the sun and the moon, and the stars are all subservient to His Law and Commands; Verily, it is patent that all creation is His, and authority too vests in Him, and Most Blessed is he, the Lord of all the Worlds. (Quran 7:54)

Ask them (O Prophet), "Who is it who provides sustenance for you from the heavens and the earth? Is it He in Whose power are hearing and sight, and Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and Who rules and regulates all affairs?" (If you ask) they will say, "It is Allah (Who does all this)." Ask them, then, "Wherefore, then, do you not fear Him (and change your ways)?" (Say): "Such is Allah, your real Rabb and true, and, apart from Truth, what remains but error, and so wherefore do you get turned astray?' (Quran 10:31-32)

He (it is Who) created the heavens and the earth in Truth; He it is Who makes the night overlap the day and the day overlap the night, and made, the son and the moon subservient (to His Law), each one following a course till an appointed time ... such is God, your Rabb; His is the Kingdom and there is no ilah but He; and why, then, do you keep getting turned away? (Quran 39:5-6)

Allah it is Who made the night for you that you may find rest and peace in it, and the day in which you are enabled to see ... Such is Allah, your Rabb Creator of every thing. There is no ilah but He; so why are you deluded into straying? ... Allah it is Who made the earth a place for you to live and rest upon, and the sky a roof over you, and gave you shapes; and good shapes at that, and provided for your provision good and wholesome food; such is Allah, your Rabb, and, so, blessed be He, the Lord of all the Worlds. He alone is the Living (One); there is no ilah, but He and to Him alone then address all your prayers. (Quran 40:61-65)

And Allah (it was Who) created you from clay...He merges night into day and day into night, and made the sun and the moon obey His Law, each following its course until an appointed timer Such is Allah, your Rabb; in Him vests all Sovereignty, while those; on call to besides him possess no such authority; and if you call upon them, they hear not your call and if they did they would not make any reply and, on the Day of Judgement, they will (to you discomfiture), (but) repudiate (and disown) your association of them with God. (Quran 35:11, 13-14)

And to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, and all are abjectly obedient and subservient to Him..., He propounds to you a similitude from your own (experience): Has any of your slaves a share in owning any of the things which We have bestowed upon you? Do they equal right, with you in the ownership and use of these things? Do you fear them as you fear your equals? Thus do we expound arguments to point the way to reality to those with wisdom and understanding, but wrong-doers merely follow their own baseless notions... Therefore (O' Prophet, and those of you who believe in him), set your face steadily and truly to the Faith; establish God's handi-work according to the pattern on which He has read, mankind; no change let there be in the work wrought by Him. This is the straight and correct road, but many among mankind know this not. (Quran 30:26, 28-30)

And, (the wrongdoers) did not appreciate God (and His attributes) in proper measure, and (they will see that) on the Day of judgment He will hold the earth in his fist, and the heavens will be rolled-up in His right hand; blessed is He and far above the (supposed) partners they associate with Him. (Quran 39:67).

And praise all is due to Allah alone, the Rabb of the heavens and the Rabb of the earth, and Rabb of all the Worlds; and to Him belongs all Greatness and Glory throughout the heavens and the earth; and He is exalted in Power, and the All-Wise. (Quran 45:36, 37)

He is the Rabb of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them; so give your 'ibadah to Him (O' Prophet) and remain steadfast in your worship of Him; (and) do yen know of aught like Him? (Quran 19:65)

And Allah (alone) knows the hidden realities of the heavens and the earth, and to Him are referred all matters, so give your 'ibadah to Him (alone), and rely not upon any but Him. (Quran 11:123)

He is the Rabb of the East and of the West; No ilah there is but He, and so entrust all your affairs unto Him (alone). (Quran 73:9)

Verily this brotherhood of yours (that is, of all the prophets) is a single brotherhood, and I am your Rabb, wherefore give your 'ibadah to Me. Men have apportioned rububiyyah and the duty of 'ibadah on their own (without any sanction from Us), and all of them will, ultimately, return to Us. (Quran 21:92-93)

Obey that which has been sent down to you from your Rabb, and do not obey others besides Him (as supposed protectors or guardians). (Quran 7:3)

Say (O Prophet): "O people of the Book: Pledge your creed to that which is common between us and you, that we do not give our 'ibadah to any but Allah and that we associate none with Him, and that we do not asks any human being a rabb besides Him. (Quran 3:64)

Say (O Prophet): I seek refuge with the (Sole) Rabb of all mankind, the (Sole) Monarch over all mankind, and the (Sole) Ilah of all." (Quran 114:1-3)

So whosoever looks forth to meeting his Rabb let him do pious deeds, and associate not any with his worship of Him. (Quran 18:110)

The foregoing verses bring out as clearly as possible that the Holy Qur'an uses rububiyyah as exactly synonymous with sovereignty, and the concept of Rabb it presents is that Allah is the Absolute Monarch of all creation, and its sole Lord and Master, and, as such:

He is our Cherisher and Provider and Sustainer, and of all that constitutes creation;
It is He Who looks after all our needs, governs all our affairs, and is alone worthy of our entrusting all our affairs to His discretion;
It is by virtue of this very attribute that faith in Him is the only right basis on which to build up the structure of human life in proper manner, and attachment only to His central Personage is capable of bringing together different individuals and groups and forming them into an Ummah.

He alone is worthy of the 'ibadah, and submission, and worship, of all humanity and other creatures; and He alone is the Lord, Master, and Ruler, of ourselves, and all else besides.

The pagans, whether Arabs or others, have always committed the error, which continues even today, of splitting up the comprehensive concept of rububiyyah into its five facets as if they could exist separately or be vested in different beings. The Qur'an lives most cogent and irrefutable arguments that the Universe is one, and that there is no room in it at all for Supreme Authority and rububiyyah vesting in any but the same Being. The very fact that the universe is subject to one supreme law shows that rububiyyah is reserved solely for Allah, Who alone brought the universe into existence. Therefore, whoever attributes any portion of rububiyyah to any but Him seeks but to depart from or ignore the ultimate fundamental Reality, to turn away from the Reality of the universe, to rebel against Truth, and, by thus going against what exists, only brings loss to himself and ultimate disaster.

CHAPTER3
IBADAH

Like the other two basic terms already dealt with, the term *'ibadah* too has several different meanings, though all related to each other. The basic concept implied by the root word, *'abd*, is that of acknowledging someone other than oneself as holding supremacy or enjoying overlordship and of abdicating one's freedom and independence in big favour, of relinquishing any resistance to or disobedience of him, and of surrendering oneself totally to his authority. Since slavery or bondage too are tantamount to similar status, the first sense the word conveys to the mind of any Arab is of this very factor, namely, slavery or bondage.
Also, since the primary role of a slave is to obey his master and carry out his wishes, the word also carries the sense of submission and obedience. Next, a slave not only submits himself to the will of his master physically, but mentally too he accepts his

supremacy, and if he at the same time has feelings of gratitude for his kindnesses and favours, he is inclined spontaneously to go out of his way in extolling the master and in showing respect and regard for him. He expresses and demonstrates his obligation in many ways to show his deep attachment, in a manner amounting almost to worship although, obviously, this comes into play only when, in addition to physical bondage, there is mental attachment too.
There are two other senses also in which the word or its derivatives are employed, but they are secondary, and hence it is not necessary to go into them at this stage.

The Qur'anic Use of the Term

On studying the Qur'an we find that, the word is used wholly in the three senses explained above, except that on occasion both the first and the second senses are implied, on others the second only, on still others the third only and, in yet other places, all the three. Here are examples of use in the first and second senses:

> (i) Then We sent Musa and his brother Haroon, with clear proofs of their prophethood to the Pharaoh and his nobles, but they treated them with disdain because of haughtiness born of power. "Should we," they said, "believe in two mere humans like ourselves, and that too of a nation which is in bondage to us?" (Quran 23:-45-47)
>
> (ii) And the Pharaoh reminded Musa of having reared him from his childhood, (to which Musa replied): "As for the obligation you remind me of, is it not a fact that happened only because you had made the Bani Israel your slaves (but for which fact I may never have come into your household)?" (Quran 26:18-23)
>
> > The words *'aabidoon* and *'abbadta* employed respectively in the two verses imply bondage, submission, and obedience. When the Pharaoh used the first word in respect of Hazrat Musa and Hazrat Haroon's nation, what he meant was that the Bani Israel were in bondage to the Egyptians and fully subservient to them. And, when Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace), used the second word in reply to the Pharaoh, he meant that the latter had enslaved the Bani Israel and made them do his bidding.
>
> (iii) O' you who believe! Eat of the clean and good things We have bestowed on you, and render due gratitude to God, if you do truly give *'ibadah* to Him alone. (Quran 2:172)
>
> > The background of this verse is that, in the pre-Islamic period, the Arabs imposed various kinds of restrictions upon themselves in the matter of eating and drinking, in deference to the dictate, of their priests or due to superstitions, which had come down from their ancestors. When, however, they embraced Islam, the Qur'an demanded that if they now really felt that they owed *'ibadah* to Allah alone, they should forget all those restrictions, and eat without hesitation all that was permitted by Islam. The idea, clearly, is that if they had now really submitted their will to that of God, they should shed all the taboos imposed by their priests or ancestors, and instead observe only the Islamic injunctions in the matter of eating and drinking.
>
> (iv) Say (O' Prophet): Shall I tell yon of a fate worse than this? It is the fate of

those whom Allah placed under His curse, who drew His wrath upon themselves, and of whom many were turned into apes and swine, and who rendered *'ibadah* to *taghoot*. (Quran 5:60)

(v) And We sent Prophets unto all the peoples (to teach them) to give' their *'ibadah* to Allah and not to *taghoot.* ... (Quran 16:36)

(vi) And there are good tidings for those who gave up the *'ibadah* of *taghoot* and adopted that of Allah (instead). (Quran 39:17)

In all these three verses, *'ibadah* of *taghoot* means bondage to any or all of what the latter term stands for, that is, every state or authority or leadership, etc., which, in transgression against God, makes its own word prevail in the land, whether by the use of force or intimidation or through temptation and so on. And according to the Qur'an to submit to the dictates of all such authority and do its bidding amounts to no less than the *'ibadah* of *taghoot.* [Nasser in Egypt and Bhutto in Pakistan, were glaring recent examples of *Taghootdom*. There have been others before elsewhere, and there are many another contemporaneously making their word prevail against Allah's and invoking personality or secular cults as the better alternatives forgetting that, that they will one day have to render account to Allah shorn of all earthly authority, actually a bounty from Him for their trial. Abu Asad]
Now we come to some of the verses in which the word is used in the second sense only, that of submission or obedience:

(i) O' Sons of Adam, did I not enjoin on you that you do not give *ibadah* to Satan, for he is your avowed enemy? (Quran 36:60)

As everybody knows, no-one really worships Satan in the formal sense, and in fact he is cursed by the whole world, and hence the above charge, which will be made upon mankind on the Day of Judgement, means that people who obeyed the commands of the Devil and allowed themselves to be misled to the path shown by him thereby in effect gave their *'ibadah* to him.

(ii) (And when it will be the Day of Judgement, God will say): "Gather together all the wrongdoers and their associates, as also the gods other than Allah to whom they gave their *'ibadah* and show them to the door of Hell ..." And they will turn to one another in dispute. The worshippers will say, "It is you who used to come to us from the right hand (of power and authority)!" Those worshipped will reply, "Nay, (now you are blaming us) but is it not that you yourselves had no Faith and were in obstinate rebellion (to God)." (Quran 37:22-23, 27-30)

If we reflect on the accusation and cross-accusation between those who gave their *'ibadah* and those to whom it was given, we find that the latter do not here comprise any gods or idols but those religious or other "popular" leaders who came to the people in the garb of well-wishers or saviours of the nation or liberators, etc., and led them along the wrong path. The reference is to people who put on sanctified airs, and, while claiming to be friends, caused mischief in the land. It is blind obedience to such people that is here characterised as *'ibadah*.

(iii) They (Jews and Christians) made their learned men and priests their *rabbs* instead of Allah, and Jesus son of Mary too, though they were not bidden except

to give their *'ibadah* to Allah alone. (Quran 9:31)

Here making of the learned men and priests into *rabbs* and the giving of *'ibadah* to them does not mean believing them to be gods, but making them the sole authority for deciding what to do and what not to do, and obeying their behests without caring to look for any divine or prophetic sanction behind them. This is the explanation, which was given by the Holy Prophet himself (may peace be upon him) when, on an occasion, the question was put to him by a convert who had previously been a Christian.

As to the third sense, of worship, this has two aspects: the first is that of performing one or more of the various rites of worship, such as bowing before the person or thing, standing in his or its presence with hands folded across the breast, of offering sacrifices before it, etc., irrespective of whether the person, etc., involved is regarded as god in his own right or as someone able to intercede with a major god or having a share in the running of the universe under the control of that god.

The other is to believe in the person, etc., as having control over the realm of cause and effect, and praying to him, invoking him in times of distress or trial, and seeking his protection against danger or disaster.

Both kinds of acts amount, according to the Qur'an, to worship, e.g.,

(i) Say, (O'prophet): 'I have been forbidden to worship those whom you people worship other than Allah now that I have clear guidance from my *Rabb*." (Quran 40:66)

(ii) (And Ibrahim said to his people): "And I part company with you and turn away from you (all) and from those whom you invoke other than Allah, and I shall call on my *Rabb* instead " And when he had turned away from them and from those they worshipped other than Allah, We blessed him with a son Ishaq (Isaac) ...(Quran 19:48-49)

(iii) And who is more astray than one who calls on those other than Allah who will not make him any answer till Doomsday and who are in fact unaware even of being invoked; and when the people shall be gathered on the Day of Judgement, those so invoked will turn hostile to them and will repudiate their acts of worship. (Quran 46:5-6)

In all these three verses, the Qur'an itself clarifies that by *'ibadah* here is meant calling on the supposed gods or invoking them for help.

(iv) On the other hand, they used to worship the jinn, and many believed in them. (Quran 34:41)

This worship of *Jinns* (genii) is explained later as Follows:

(v) And some there are among men who seek the protection of some among the *jinns*. (Quran 72:6)

In other words, to seek the protection of the jinn amounts to giving them worship and believing that they have the power to grant such protection.

(v) On the Day when Allah will gather them and the gods they used to worship other than Him, He will ask the latter whether it was they who had misled the people or it was the people who had themselves gone astray. And they will reply "Glory be to you! How could it have been fitting for us to take for protectors others besides You?" (Quran 25:17-18)

The persons referred to here as having been worshipped are, obviously, the saintly and the pious, while worship of them implies belief in their possessing some of the attributes which are actually divine and in their being capable of listening to and granting the prayers of someone far away, and the showing of respect for them in such manner amounts to worship.

(vii) And on the Day when Allah will gather them together, and will say to the angels: "Are you those they worshipped?" and they will reply, "Glory be to you what have we to do with them? It is You Whom we regard as our Protector." (Quran 34:40,41)

Here the `*ibadah* of the angels means their worship, for which purpose their idols were kept in places of worship, and various acts of worship were gone through in the hope of pleasing them and winning their favours and enlisting their help in worldly affairs.

(viii) And they used to worship, other than Allah, those who had not the power to do them either harm or good, and used to say, "These are our intercessors with God." (Quran 10:18)

(ix) And those who have taken others than God as their helpers, and say: "We do not perform acts of worship towards them except that they bring us nearness to God." (Quran 39:3)

Here too the particular acts of worship amount to *ibadah*, and the particular manner in which it did is also indicated.

All the above examples illustrate the use of the word *'ibadah* (or one or more of its derivatives) in one or other of the three senses, and we have now to give some examples of the comprehensive use of the word, embracing all the three. But before we do so, it seems desirable to be clear about one point.

In all the verses cited above, there is reference to the worship of others than Allah. Where worship (*'ibadah*) implies bondage and submission, those worshipped are, either the Devil, or those rebels against God who have become *taghoots* and who, instead of making people give their obedience to God, make it exclusive for themselves; or those leaders (whether political or religious) who ignore the injunctions of the Qur'an and make the people follow the ways devised by themselves [e.g., the upholders of "Kemalism", and "Panchshila", two heretical secularist concepts, both preferred openly to Islam, the pure Muslims being persecuted and even maligned as enemies of the country. Abu Asad.]. Where the word does mean worship-that is, performance of various rituals of worship, etc. -those worshipped happen to be either the saints or other pious people, or the Prophets who were raised to the status of godhood in varying degrees contrary to their own teachings; or the angels or the *jinns* who, through a misconception, were believed to have a share in divinity; or idols or

imaginary powers or other physical representations which became the objects of worship through the insinuations of Satan. The Holy Qur'an pronounces all such gods or objects of worship to be false, and their `worship' to be wrong, irrespective of whether it amounts to bondage, or obedience, or the actual observance of the ritual of worship. All, insists the Qur'an, are God's creatures and his slaves. They have no right to be given any kind of worship, nor does this worship beget anything but frustration, and debasement. Allah alone is the Lord of all, whether it be these gods or the rest of creation, and He alone has all the power and the authority and, hence, He alone is deserving of worship in any of the senses of the word:

(i) Verily those you worship are God's creatures like you, so call them, and let them make reply to you (that is, grant your prayers), if you are in the right."... And those to whom you call besides Him, can neither help you nor (for the matter of that) even themselves. (Quran 7:194-197)

(ii) And they say that Rahman (the God of Mercy) has taken a son now Himself. Far above is He of such a thing! They (the supposed sons) are, actually, His creatures whom He has honoured. (And yet, despite this honor) they dare not open their mouth on their own to make any submission to Him. They only do as He bids. He knows what is visible to them, and also what is hidden from them. They cannot intercede with Him in behalf of anyone (at all) save where He Himself wishes to accede to any intercession. And they are constantly in awe of Him. (Quran 21:26-28)

(iii) And they have made goddesses of angels, who are actually creatures of *Ar-Rahman*, The Merciful God. (Quran 43:19)

(iv) And they have assumed some blood relationship between God and the *jinns*, though the jinn, know for themselves that they will one day have to appear before Him to account for their conduct. (Quran 37:158)

(v) Neither did Jesus consider it beneath his dignity to be a slave of Allah, nor do the angels; and whosoever considers it beneath him to give himself in bondage to Allah, (then where can he escape from Him, and) He will gather them all to Himself. (Quran 4:172)

(vi) The Sun and the Moon both follow courses (exactly) computed; and the plants and the trees both (alike) bow in adoration and submission to Allah (their Creator). (Quran 55:5-6)

(vii) The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, proclaim His Glory; there is not a thing but celebrates His praises, except that you understand it not. (Quran 17:44)

(viii) And to Him belongs all beings in the heavens and the earth, and all are subservient to his commands. (Quran 30:26)

(ix) And there is not a creature that moves but He has grasp of its forelock (that is, complete control over it). (Quran 11:56)

(x) There is not a single being in the heavens and the earth but will come to (God) Most Gracious as a bonded slave; He does take account of them (all), and has numbered them (all) exactly. And everyone of them will come to Him singly

on the Day of Judgement. (Quran 19:93-95)

(xi) Say (O' Prophet): "O God! Lord of Power (and Rule), You Grant power to whom You pleases, and shed Power from whom You please; You endue with honour whom You please, and You bring low whom You please. In Your hand is all Good [That is, no good can come to any being unless Allah wills it so. Abu Asad]. Verily, You have (all the) power over everything. (Quran 3:26)

Having thus clarified categorically that all who are worshipped besides Allah in any form were or are no more than His creatures and slaves with no power or authority of their own at all, the Qur'an demands of all human beings and *jinns* that *'ibadah* must, in whatever form it take, be reserved exclusively for Allah. All bondage, submission, and worship should be to or of Him alone, and there should not be even the slightest semblance of these for anyone else:

(i) And We sent a messenger to every people with the message that they give their '*ibadah* to Allah and forbear from giving it to *taghoot.* (Quran 16:36)

(ii) Good tidings are for those who turned away from the *'ibadah* of *taghoot*, and turned to Allah instead. (Quran 39:17)

(iii) Did I not enjoin upon you, O' sons of Adam, not to give your *'ibadah* to Satan, for he is an open enemy to you, but to give it to Me instead and that is the straight path? (Quran 36:60-61)

(iv) They made their learned men and praises into *Rabbs*, although they were not bidden except to give their *'ibadah* to Allah alone. (Quran 9:31)

(v) O' you who believe! If yon have really made your *'ibadah* exclusive for Us, then eat without hesitation of the clean and good things We have bestowed upon you, and render gratitude to God. (Quran 2:172)

In these verses the *'ibadah* which is ordered to be reserved exclusively for God is that which amounts to bondage or slavery and submission and obedience, and the implication clearly is that men are being told to forbear giving their submission and obedience to *taghoot*, to Satan, to the priests and rabbis, and to fathers and forefathers, and to give it instead to Allah alone:

(i) Say (O' Prophet): "Forbidden it is for me to give my *'ibadah* to those to whom you call instead of God. Clear signs have I received from my Lord, and I have eke been bidden to bow to the Will of the Lord of all the Worlds " (Quran 40:66)

(ii) And your *Rabb* has said: 'Call to Me, and I shall hear your prayer [This does not mean that all the prayers will necessarily be granted the way one wishes. The Holy Prophet is reported to have stated on one occasion that no prayer ever goes waste. Either Allah Almighty grants it, or He bestows something better-may be after some times- or He averts some harm or disaster instead. It must be understood, however, the point does not need any argument that the prayer must be for something good. It would be the height of depravity, for example, for some misguided fool to pray that Allah enable him to seduce the wife of a friend or to make a huge profit in a black-marketing transaction, sad so on. And he certainly can have no right to feel ungrateful to Allah for not granting his Prayer. Abu Asad.] - and as for those who go against My Commands, they will surely be

flung into (the fire) of hell." (Quran 40:60)

(iii) This is Allah, the *Rabb* of all of you. All Power is His alone, and as for those you call to others than Him, they do not own any power; if you call to them, they do not listen to your prayer, and if they could listen they would not be able to respond, and on the Day of Judgement they will simply repudiate your association of them with God! (Quran 35:13-14)

(iv) Say (O' Prophet):' Do you give *'ibadah* to those, other than Allah who have power to do you neither harm nor good, (whereas) Allah alone is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (Quran 5:76)

In these verses the emphasis is on making '*ibadah* exclusive for Allah, in the sense of worship, and there is also evidence that the sending up of prayers to someone is also an act of ‘ibadah, while the verses that precede and follow those quoted above speak of these supposed gods who were treated as co-sharers with Allah in His *rububiyyah* in the supernatural sense.

It should not therefore be difficult for anyone with even the least sense to understand that wherever the Qur'an speaks of the `*ibadah* of Allah, and it does not appear from the context that it is used specifically in one or other of its three different senses, it encompasses all the three, namely, bondage, submission, and worship, e.g.

(i) Verily, I am Allah; there is no *ilah* hot I; therefore give your *'ibadah* to Me (alone). (Quran 20:14)

(ii) This is Allah, your *Rabb*; there is no *ilah* but He-the Creator of all that exists; therefore give your *'ibadah* to Him (alone), and He it is Who looks after every thing and its needs. (Quran 6:102)

(iii) Say (O' Prophet): "O People, if you are in doubt as to what my *deen* is, then let it be clear to you that I do not give my *'ibadah* to those other than Allah to whom you give yours instead, I give mine to Allah, Who causes you to die, and I have been commanded to be of believers (in Him)." (Quran 10:104)

(iv) Those to whom you give your *'ibadah* others than, Allah, they are nothing but things or beings whom your forefathers and you yourselves have, under false notions, come to believe as invested with divinity. Allah Himself has not sent down any proof therefor. To Allah alone belongs all Power and the Realm. Clearly has He ordained that to none but Him may one give one's *'ibadah*, and that (alone) is the straight path. (Quran 12:40)

(v) And Allah alone knows the realities unseen by man; with Him alone rests ultimate dispensation; therefore give your *'ibadah* to Him, and in Him alone place your reliance. (Quran 11:123)

(vi) To Him (alone) belongs all that is on front of us or behind us or in between; nor is your *Rabb* given to lapses of memory; He is the *Rabb* of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in between; therefore give your *ibadah* to Him alone, and keep steadfast in such *'ibadah* alone. (Quran 19:64-65)

(vii) So, whoso wishes to meet His *Rabb*, then let him do pious deeds, and not mix up the *'ibadah* of his *'Rabb* with that of any other. (Quran 18: 110)

There truly seems not the slightest reason for taking the word *'ibadah* as used in these verses to have only one or other of the three senses, of worship, bondage, or submission. Actually, the Qur'an puts its whole *d'awah* and its import in verses like these and, obviously, its whole *d'awah* is none other than that our bondage, our submission, and our worship should all be for Allah, wholly and solely. Therefore, the restriction of the meaning of the term, in the above verses, to just any one of the three senses amounts to placing a limitation on the *d'awah* of the Qur'an and the logical result of this would be that those who embrace the Islamic faith with such a restricted understanding of the Qur'anic *d'awah* will be able to achieve only a sub-standard compliance with its precepts and will remain defective in their *Iman*.

CHAPTER 4
DEEN

Usage and Meaning

Like the three terms already dealt with, the fourth, and last of the basic Qur'anic terms, namely, *deen*, had different connotations among the Arabs, and their use of it and its various derivatives revolved round one or other of the following four basic concepts or relationships, etc., namely:

1. Dominance, or sway, on the part of someone in authority;
2. Obedience, servitude, or worship on the part of the one submitting to the authority;
3. Laws, rules or regulations or code imposed, and required to be observed, in the context of the above relationship; and
4. Calling to account (for obedience or non-obedience to the Authority or for compliance or non-compliance with its dictates), passing judgement, and pronouncing reward or punishment.

The word had not, however, attained the status of a formal term as such before the revelation of the Qur'an. The Arabs were not very clear in their minds as to the concepts involved nor were their ideas lofty in this context and that is the reason why the word had not found its way into the terminology of any systematic and recognised school of thought. It was in the Qur'an in which, obviously because the word was particularly suited to its purpose, which it was given very clear-cut and definite connotations, and it was this aspect which made the word one of the most important in the Qur'anic terminology. In that terminology, it stands for the entire way of life, of which the composite factors are:

1. Sovereignty and supreme authority;
2. Obedience and submission to such authority;
3. The system of thought and action established through the exercise of that authority; and
4. Retribution meted out by the authority, in consideration of loyalty and obedience to it, or rebellion and transgression against it.

And, as in other cases, the Qur'an employs the term, on different occasions, in one or more of the above four senses, but where the intention is to imply the whole way of life, it uses the definite article 'al' before the word, to make it read '*al-Deen*' Examples of such different uses are as follows:

First and Second Sense

It is Allah Who has made the earth as a resting place for you, and the sky a canopy, and has given you shape-and what a piece of work it is!-and has provided for your sustenance things pure and wholesome; such is Allah, your Lord. So Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. He is the Living (One); there is no god but He; so address your prayers to Him, making your *deen* exclusive for Him. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (Quran 64:65)

Say (O Mohammad): "I have been bidden to give my *'ibadah* to Allah, making my *deen* exclusive to Him, and bidden to be the first of His obedient-servants."... Say (O' Mohammed): "It is Allah to Whom I give my *'ibadah*, making my *deen* exclusive for Him; (and as for you,) give yours to whoever or whatsoever you may wish to give it to (if you will not listen to me but wish to continue in your wrong ways)"... And as for those who are careful and wise enough not to give their *'ibadah* to *taghoot*, and who turn to Allah alone, there (surely) are glad tidings for them. (Quran 39:11,14&17)

Verily We have sent down to you (0' Muhammad) Book, with Truth; therefore, make your *deen* exclusive for Allah, and give your *ibadah* to Him alone. Hark! *Deen* pertains exclusively to Him (and Him alone). (Quran 39:2-3)

And to Him belongs all, there is in the heavens and the earth, and *Deen* is (rightly) His alone. Why is it, then, that you fear others the way yon should fear Him (alone)? (Quran 16:52)

Do (the non-believers) want some *deen* other than Allah's, and this despite the fact that to Him are subservient, willingly or unwillingly, all the creatures and thing, that constitute the universe and to Him it is that they shall (all) return'? (Quran 3:83)

And they were not bidden except that they give their *'ibadah* to Allah, making their *deen* exclusive for Him (and Him alone). (Quran 98:5)

In all the above examples the word has been employed to signify the vesting of the Supreme authority in Allah alone, tacit acknowledgement of that fact, and complete unquestioning obedience and submission to that authority. The making of one's *deen* exclusive for Allah means that one should not treat anyone other than Allah as having the ultimate authority, domain, and rulership over the universe and should so make one's obedience and submission exclusive for Him that there is no association of anyone else with Him in this respect. What is required is that there should not be even the slightest element of association and treatment of anyone else as having sovereignty or authority and being entitled to obedience and submission as of independent right. [The implication here is that any submission to anyone other than Allah should only be in pursuance of and in conformity with the obedience and submission due exclusively to Him, and with scrupulous regard for the limits prescribed by Him. Anything done by a son in obedience to the commands of his father, by a wife to those of her husband, by a slave or a servant to those of his master, and all other manifestations of obedience constitute, notwithstanding the nature of the relationship if

in pursuance of Allah's Injunction and within the limits prescribed by Him, submission to Him in practice and, as such acts of '*ibadah*. If, however, they do not satisfy this criterion, and obedience is rendered to someone as if it was dire to him as of independent right, they amount to sin, and rebellion against Allah's Commands. In a State founded and run in accordance with His Law, it is the religious duty of every Muslim to obey the state and all its commands. If it is not so founded and run, then it is sin too obey. A. A. Maududi]

The Third Sense

Say (O' Muhammad): "If you suffer from any doubts as to the details, or validity or rationality of my *deen*, then let it be known to you that I do not give me ‘ibadah to anyone other than Allah He Who (having alone the power in this regard) causes you to die, and I have been bidden to be of the believers (in Him), and to set my conduct and coarse wholly and solely according to the *Deen* and not to become one of those who associate others with Allah. (Quran 10:104-105)

Authority vests in Allah alone. (And) He has Commanded that we do not give our *'ibadah* to any accept Him; this is the *Deen*, right and proper. (Quran 12:40)

And to Him belong all who are in the heavens and the earth. All are subservient to Him,... He has propounded to you a similitude from your own (experience). Is any of your slaves a partner with you in the bounty We have conferred upon you? Do you make them equal partners in your ownership of your possessions? ... The truth is that these misguided people follow their own wrong and baseless notions, ideas and desires without proper knowledge... So you (O' Muhammad) set your face straight upon the *Deen*, and follow the natural course meant by Allah for men [What is meant is that it is Allah alone Who has created man, and provided for his sustenance and others of his needs, that there is no god but He, and that He alone is man's Master and the only authority rightfully deserving of his worship. Therefore, it would be fitly in accordance with this natural fact that man should believe, and behave, as only Allah's creature and servant and not anyone else's at all. A.A.Maududi]. It is not right that Allah's Design be interfered with. This is the right and proper *Deen* and yet many a people know this not. (Quran 30: 26,28-30).

The adulterer, and the adulteress, let them both be given a hundred stripes each, and let not pity overcome you in a matter of Allah's *Deen* [Adultery, in Islam, is the commission of the sexual act between a male end a female not married to each other. The fact that it has been committed through mutual consent is no mitigation of the offence. The punishment here prescribed is that in the case of persons who are unmarried. In the case of a married person (who would have less reason to commit adultery), the punishment is that be or she be stoned to death, and there are categoric orders that this be done in public and be witnessed by a crowd (so as to serve as a lesson to others). In fact all bodily punishments are required, by the *Shari'ah* to be inflicted in public. There is far more psychology in this than in all the writings of those who decry whipping or death sentences, in the name of humanness. Abu Asad]. (Quran 24:2)

In Allah's Writ, the number of months has always been twelve to a year, from the day He erected the heavens and the earth; of which (twelve) four are sacred; this is the true and straight *deen* (usage). (Quran 9:36)

And thus did those whom they associated with Allah make it appear a commendable act in the eyes of the *mushrikeen* [That is, the people guilty of shirk, the association of others with God. A.A. Maududi] to slay their children in order to lead them to their own destruction, and cause confusion in their *deen*. (Quran 6:138)

Have they taken some people to be partners (with Allah) who prescribe ways for them in the nature of *deen*, for which they have had no permission from Allah. (Quran 42:21)

For you, your *deen*, and for me mine own. (Quran 109:6)

In all these verses, the word *deen* has been used to mean the law, rules or regulations, *shari'ah*, or code of conduct, or that system of thought and action which a person subscribes to and lives by. If the ultimate authority for the law or code, etc., which is followed, is God Himself, then the person concerned in observing Allah's *deen*; if it owes us itself to the commandments of a monarch, then he is in the monarch's *Deen*; if it is prescribed by some priests or pundits or other religious leaders then he is observing their *deen*; and if it has been laid down by the family, the clan or the tribe, or the national body-politic, then he is following their *deen*. In other words, the basic, critical factor as to the *deen* a person follows is the ultimate authority responsible for it.

The Fourth Sense

Verily, that which you are promised (that is, life after death) is true, and deep (the reckoning and the judgement and retribution) must indeed come to pass. (Quran 51:5-6)

Have you noticed the person who denies *Deen* (the life after death)? He is one who spurns the orphan, and does not urge people to feed the needy and the indigent. (Quran 107:1-3)

And what do you know of the Day of *Deen*? Yea, what (little) do you know of the Day of *deen*. That is the Day when no human being shall be able to be of any service to another, the Day on which all authority and dispensation will tangibly be in the hands of Allah. (Quran 82:17-19)

Obviously, in these verses, the word has been used to imply both the final reckoning when men shall have been raised from the dead as well as the reward or punishment which will follow.

As a Comprehensive Term

In the examples given above, the word has been used more or less in the four different

senses in which the Arabs employed it before the advent of Islam. It remains to give a few examples of its use to mean a whole way of life in which a person gives his submission and obedience to someone whom he regards as having the ultimate authority, shapes his conduct according to the bounds and laws and rules prescribed by that being, looks to him for recognition honour, and reward for loyal service, and fears the disgrace or punishment that could follow any lack on his part. There is perhaps no word in the terminology of any country or people-other than Muslims-which would comprehensively embrace all these factors. The word `state' as employed in our own day does, to some extent, approximate to the sense, but even this word lacks the far wider connotation which would bring it on a par with the word *Deen*. Examples of the Qur'anic use of *deen* in this comprehensive sense are as follows:

Fight those people who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Day of Judgement, nor do they treat as forbidden that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Prophet, and who do not make the true *deen* their *deen*; fight them until they decide to submit and agree to pay the *'jizya*. [This was a tax paid by all non-Muslim, who submitted to Islamic rule and were therefore entitled to its protection. Its incidence was light and a was only paid by those who were capable of bearing arms and had the means to pay. In return, they were excused from military service; which is obligatory on the Muslims. Abu Asad] (Quran 9:29)

Here, the word *deen* obviously embraces belief in Allah, as the Supreme Authority, and submission and obedience to Him as a logical requirement following on from such recognition, the raising after death and calling to account, pronouncing judgement, and pronouncing and implementing reward or punishment, as also the code which prescribes what is permitted and what is forbidden. It is after having detailed these four factors that the Qur'an accuses the people involved of not making the true *deen* their *deen* too.

And, said the Pharaoh: Leave me to slay Musa, and then let him call upon his *Rabb* (to save him). (I must slay him for) I am very much afraid that he might change your *deen* or disturb the peace of land. (Quran 40:26)

In the light of all the details contained in the Qur'an of what transpired between the Pharaoh and Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace), it is clear that the word *deen* as used here does not stand only for `religion' but covers also the whole politico-social and cultural set-up. The Pharaoh's contention was that if Hazrat Musa (on whom be peace) succeeded in his mission, there would come about a revolutionary change in which the prevailing way of life with the Pharaoh as the ultimate authority, together with all the laws, rules, and customs etc., would be uprooted, and either a whole new way of life would take its place on completely new foundations, or no new way of life would establish itself at all and the land would fall a prey to anarchy.

Insofar as Allah's scheme for man goes, the only *Deen* for him is 'Islam' and none other. (Quran 3:19)

And whosoever seeks any *deen* other than `Islam', it shall never receive acceptance.

(Quran 3:85)
It is He-Allah-Who sent his Messenger with true Guidance, and with the True *Deen* to make it triumph over other *deens*, caring naught what annoyance this may cause to those who associate others with Him. (Quran 9:33)

And continue the fight against them until all mischief is effectively destroyed and the only *deen* holding away is Allah's *deen* and none other. (Quran 8:39)

When Allah's help arrives, and victory results, and you see people joining in Allah's *deen* in crowd, then Glorify your *Rabb*, and beg forgiveness of Him, for He is the Oft-Forgiving? [Perhaps the more correct translation than the one I have acutely chosen would be when Allah's special help arrived, and victory resulted, then it is your duty that you Glorify your *Rabb* (Who sent the help and gave you the victory) and that you seek forgiveness of Him (for any failing you may have unwittingly committed); Verily He is the Oft-Forgiving. Abu Asad] (Quran 110:1-3)

In all these verses, the word *Deen* stands for the complete way of life, including man's beliefs, his moral principles, and his behaviour in all walks of life.

In the first two verses it is said that the right and proper way of life intended by God for man is that founded on obedience to Him and conformity to His Laws. Any other way of life, based on someone else's supposed right to ultimate authority and submission to it, has not the slightest place in Allah's scheme for man and is hence as wholly unacceptable to Him. And this is but natural. Man is God's creature and lives in His Domain and God is his Master and Sustainer. How then, can God be expected to consent that man may spend his life in obedience to someone else similarly His creature and dependant, and look to that someone for guidance?

The third verse proclaims that Allah sent His Messenger (may peace be upon him) with the true *Deen*, the way of life meant by Him for man, which is known as Islam, and it was the primary purpose of the Prophet's mission that he should make this *Deen* prevail in their stead and triumph over all other ways of life.

In the fourth, the believers have been ordered to fight all non-believers until mischief-that is, every system of thought, belief, and action which is not based on recognition of Allah as the Supreme Authority, and which therefore will perpetually remain the source of all strife and unrest-has been wiped out, and entire humanity adopts the approved way of life, Allah's *Deen*.

The fifth verse was revealed when, after 23 years of prolonged struggle the Islamic Revolution had overcome all resistance in Arabia, when Islam had established itself and been universally accepted as a system of belief, thought, morality, culture, etc., in all its details and in all walks of life, and delegation after delegation from all parts of the country was arriving to pledge allegiance to it, and the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) was thus witnessing the fulfillment of his mission. After referring to this, the verse goes on to tell the Prophet (on whom be peace) not to let any sentiments of vanity or pride arise in his mind and make him feel that he owed the success to

himself. Allah, the *Rabb* of all, and of the Prophet too (peace be upon him), is alone free of all shortcomings and failings and complete and perfect in every respect. Therefore, any credit for the success which crowned the Prophet's efforts, was due rightfully to Him alone, and the Prophet should Glorify Him, and utter His praises, and beg forgiveness for any possible shortcomings that might have occurred during his 23 years long term of service to his Lord. [May Allah's choicest peace and blessings be upon this most pious and perfect of human beings, our intercessor with Allah, on the Day of Judgement! May Allah forgive the translator for any failing or short-coming is this humble effort to present His *Deen*. Abu Asad]